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OPINION METER

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INSIDE

NATION



President Obama is launching the nation's most sweeping effort to curb gun violence in two decades.

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FOCUS



Last Monday's train accident was the latest example of Egypt's decrepit infrastructure turning lethal for the country's poorest.

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LIFE & STYLE



Lindsay Lohan pleaded not guilty Tuesday to three misdemeanor charges related to a car crash.

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CHC has 34 new patients undergoing dialysis. **PAGE 2**
Senate president names chairs of 10 committees. **PAGE 3**

20-30% retirement benefit cuts for five years, POB



» As Buck Consultants presents to lawmakers on Fund's lifespan

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Special Committee on Retirement Issues chair Rep. Mario Taitano (IR-Saipan) said his panel is open to suggestions on prolonging the NMI Retirement Fund's lifespan, including pursuing a pension obligation bond that voters approved during the Nov. 6 elections and up to five years temporary cut of 20 to 30 percent in retirement benefits, even as Fund actuary Dylan Porter of Buck Consultants presented their 2010 actuarial study to lawmakers yesterday morning.

See RETIREMENT on Page 4

NMI Retirement Fund actuary Dylan Porter of Buck Consultants, second from right, shakes hands with Senate President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), left, while House Special Committee on Retirement Issues chair Mario Taitano (IR-Saipan) and House Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero (IR-Saipan), right, look on shortly before Porter made a presentation before lawmakers about the pension agency's 2010 actuarial valuation study on Capital Hill yesterday morning.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Driver of van that sped off after hitting teenager identified

» Hikers found van abandoned in a secluded area near Obyan Beach

By FERGIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Police have identified the driver of a van that sped off after hitting and running over a teenager who later died. The teenager earlier was assaulted by two men who left him lying on a highway in Garapan.

Department of Public Safety spokesman Jason



Kim

Tarkong said yesterday that police are now hunting down the driver identified as Woo Hyun Kim, a 31-year-old male, on charges of failure to exercise due care, accidents, failure to file an accident report, and homicide by vehicle.

Superior Court associate
See DRIVER on Page 4

Fund has 2 options: Workout agreement or appoint receiver

By FERGIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Given its dire state, the NMI Retirement Fund has two options—a workout agreement between the Fund and the CNMI government or appoint a receiver, according to the Fund's trustee *ad litem's* report.

Attorney Joyce Tang of the trustee *ad litem's* Law Offices of Civile and Tang, presented the state of the Fund report in the U.S. District Court for the NMI on Tuesday.

See FUND on Page 4

Impeachment panel could wrap up work by January's end

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Rep. Tony Sablan (IR-Saipan) will be heading the seven-member Special Committee on Impeachment that could

wrap up its report and recommendation to the full House of Representatives by the end of January on a resolution impeaching Gov. Benigno R. Fitial for 18 allegations of corruption, neglect of duty, and felony.

If and when all the 16 sponsors of the im-

See IMPEACHMENT on Page 4

» Minority bloc hopes 'fair, open' discussion



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Local

CHC has 34 new patients undergoing dialysis

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

The number of patients being treated at the Commonwealth Health Center's new dialysis center continues to grow with the public hospital admitting 34 new patients last year.

Based on hospital records, 34 new patients were treated by the dialysis center in 2012, which brings to 107 the total number of dialysis patients at CHC as of Dec. 2. It was revealed that diabetes is among the

major factors in the dramatic increase of dialysis patients and increase in off-island medical referrals.

According to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., the CNMI's health profile shows alarming indicators that the current generation is under siege and under the burden of non-communicable diseases or NCDs. These are linked to an unhealthy lifestyle and linked to the lack of effective health policies in addressing this issue. It was disclosed that

people living in the CNMI are dying prematurely and are suffering from the dysfunctions related to NCDs.

"The leading cause of death in the CNMI is due to diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and stroke which are all NCDs. These NCDs and their associated risk factors account for 70 percent of deaths in the CNMI," according to the corporation's statement yesterday, adding that just after the World War II, a naval survey of the islands found no cases of diabetes. Today, however, diabetes is a major health concern.

It was learned that the dramatic increase is associated with many factors, most importantly increased use of fatty or salty imported food, increased consumption of tobacco and alcohol, and decreased physical activity.

Last Jan. 11, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, through the request of the corporation's CEO Juan N. Babauta, formally endorsed a monthly voluntary Health Walk for all government employees in order to promote healthier

living and to further promote the local "Let's Move Marianas! Yengyung with the Kangkung" initiative, which was spearheaded by the corporation in collaboration with other government and private agencies and community organizations.

One-hour administrative leave OK'd

The participation at the monthly walks are on a voluntary basis and at the discretion of department and agency heads and participating government employees will be granted one hour administrative leave as an incentive to participate in the monthly Health Walks.

This program is envisioned to bring more awareness of the need of people to eat healthy, move more and be tobacco-free.

The first Health Walk, which is themed "Let's Move with the PHS Walk," will be attended by the U.S. Public Health Services Commission Corps (PHS) team led by Assistant Surgeon General Rear Admiral Newton E. Kendig. The PHS team arrived in December for a 90-day deployment to provide technical assistance to the corporation.

The first walk is scheduled

for Jan. 22, beginning 3:30pm commencing at the Garapan Fishing Base and succeeding Health Walks will be announced at a later date.

An extension of the "Let's Move Marianas!" committee, a Health Walk subcommittee has been formed to spearhead this endeavor and is presently comprised of representatives from CHCC, the American Red Cross, the Office of the Mayor of Saipan, Chamber of Commerce, Ayuda Network, KKMP Foundation, NMC-CREES, and the Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual

Violence. The day of the walk was strategically selected by the committee to coincide with the weekly Tuesday Farmers Market located at the Fishing Basin in order to promote good nutrition by eating more fruits and vegetables and other local produce.

There will be free health education and screenings for blood sugar, high blood pressure and Body Mass Index (BMI) in order to provide participants their health status baseline. The goal in providing participants with their baseline data is to help them make realistic and reach-

able health goals for succeeding walks and other Let's Move Marianas! Initiatives this year.

The general public, including schools and the private sector, is invited to participate at these monthly health walks. For more information or if you would like to register your agency or school for this month's Health Walk, contact the Division of Public Health's NCD Bureau Health Promotion Office at 236-8703/285-3735 or via email at lets-movemarianas@gmail.com. The Let's Move Marianas! Yengyung with the Kangkung!

Bookkeeper injured in another Garapan robbery



FERDIE DE LA TORRE

A bookkeeper yesterday points to the bruises she suffered when two male teenagers beat and robbed her while she was walking on her way to deposit her employer's money at Bank of Guam on Monday morning. The victim also suffered a black eye and swelling to the back of head.

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

A bookkeeper was injured when two male teenagers, including one armed with a bladed weapon, beat her up during a daylight robbery in Garapan on Monday.

The victim, a 46-year-old Filipino, told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that she was on her way to Bank of Guam to deposit money into the account of NVM Enterprises when the attack happened.

The victim sustained lacerations and bruises to the hands and arms. She has a black eye on her right eye and swelling to the back of head. An ambulance transported her to the Commonwealth Health Center and she was released after being treated.

The suspects managed to run away with the company's \$1,200 cash.

Police said that on Monday,

Jan. 14, between 11am and 12pm the victim was walking on Kadena Di Amor Street from her company located on Middle Road in Garapan to deposit money at the bank.

Police Officer Jason Tarkong said as the victim was near St. Michael's Ambulance, she heard footsteps getting closer behind her.

When the bookkeeper turned around, one of the suspects struck her on the head and on the right eye with a rock.

As the victim noticed that one suspect was armed with a bladed weapon, she struggled. The suspects beat her up and struck her again on the head, causing her to feel dizzy.

The bookkeeper later realized that her purse was ripped open and the money was missing. She staggered back to her office where bystanders helped her and called the police.

Tarkong said the victim was unable to give a clear description of the suspects.

One suspect was described as about 5'4" tall, with dark skin, medium build, short dark hair, and wearing a light-colored shirt.

The victim said she was not sure whether the first suspect was wearing short pants or long pants.

She described the second suspect as a local male and a little bit taller than the first suspect but skinnier.

Tarkong said the NMI Crime Stoppers Program is seeking the public's help for information regarding the robbery.

Last month, a Chinese businesswoman was seriously injured when an unidentified man assaulted her and her 16-year-old daughter during a robbery near Garapan Elementary School. Police later arrested the suspect.

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Senate president names chairs of 10 committees

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Two days after the 18th Legislature's inaugural session, Senate President Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian) named yesterday

the chairpersons of 10 standing committees, but three of those are considered temporary appointments pending the resolution of Sen. Juan Ayuyu's (Ind-Rota) court case and Sen. Pete Reyes' (IR-Saipan) decision

whether to accept chairmanship. The 10 committees are headed by six senators, two of whom are chairing more than one panel.

"I made a statement earlier that all senators will chair a committee but we are still trying to work things out on some of the committees. I offered committee chairmanship to everyone," Hofschneider told *Saipan Tribune*.

Senate Legislative Secretary Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota) not only retains her chairmanship of the Fiscal Affairs Committee but is also temporary chair of the Committee on Education as well as Committee on Youth Affairs.

Senate Vice President Ralph Torres (R-Saipan) heads the Health and Welfare Committee, as well as the Rules and Procedures Committee which has

started reviewing rules on impeachment trials in anticipation of the House's likely impeachment of Gov. Benigno R. Fitial. Once the House impeaches the governor, the process moves to the Senate for trial.

Senate Floor Leader Victor Hocog (R-Rota) chairs the Public Utilities, Transportation and Communications Committee. Hocog, a strong ally of the governor, heads the same panel that previously led Senate inquiries on the governor's signing of a sole-sourced \$190.8-million diesel power purchase agreement with Saipan Development LLC. That PPA is among the issues in a new resolution impeaching the governor for 18 allegations of corruption, felony, and neglect of duty.

Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian) retains his chairmanship of the Executive Appointments and Government Investigations.

Sen. Ray Yumul (IR-Saipan) heads the Committee on Judiciary, Government and Law.

"I look forward to working with the Judiciary and other government agencies. This early, the Judiciary is requesting amendments to some laws to change some of the ways they operate. They have also raised budgetary concerns," Yumul said in a phone interview.

Sen. Frank Borja (Ind-Tinian) chairs the Resources and Economic Development Programs Committee.

Reyes, for his part, confirmed that he was offered chairmanship but he said he asked "to be

given more time to decide."

The Senate president said after consulting with their counsel, Ayuyu has yet to be sworn into office so he won't be given committee chairmanship at this time. Ayuyu is in detention pending his trial on charges related to attempts to smuggle endangered fruit bats.

Hofschneider said the 18th Senate will prioritize economic recovery, healthcare service, utilities, pension system, and education, among other things.

NMC accreditation considered in settling Fernandez lawsuit

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The chairman of the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents admitted to *Saipan Tribune* that the institution's accreditation were among the major factors considered by the board when it decided to settle its lawsuit against former president Dr. Carmen Fernandez.

Board chair Juan T. Lizama disclosed that Michael Dotts, who represented the board in court, handled the case well given all the factors that were involved in the litigation.

"When the board made the difficult decision to settle this lawsuit, we considered many things, including the prevention of a long and drawn out lawsuit and its impact on college resources that could be used for other programs and services that advance student learning," said Lizama.

The board settled the case with Fernandez in September 2012 due to increasing legal costs. *Saipan Tribune* learned that NMC had spent over \$180,000 in attorneys' fees in addition to the over \$130,000 in damages it paid Fernandez, who earlier demanded payment for the balance of her four-year contract with the board, which is worth about \$300,000.

Suspended lawyer pleads guilty, gets 40-day jail term

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Suspended lawyer Antonio M. Atalig yesterday entered a guilty plea in his domestic violence case and was subsequently slapped with a 40-day jail term that he already in prison.

Atalig signed a plea agreement with the government and pleaded guilty to two counts of assault (domestic violence).

As part of the plea deal, the government dismissed the nine other criminal counts.

Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman accepted Atalig's guilty plea and the agreement.

Wiseman sentenced the defendant to a total of one year, all suspended except 40 days.

Atalig was given credit for the 40 days he already served behind bars. It means he will no longer serve more jail time.

Atalig was placed on probation for three years. He was required to pay a \$200 fine, \$300

Fernandez's contract with NMC was for a term of four years, from May 7, 2009 through May 6, 2013. She was to receive an annual salary of \$80,000, vacation leave at eight hours per pay period, and sick leave at four hours per pay period.

Board members were sued by Fernandez for wrongful termination of her contract as president of NMC in 2010. When asked whether the decision to settle the lawsuit was a recommendation from the accreditation commission, Lizama claimed that it was not, but which the board considered.

"Certainly not, although the college's accreditation was also a part of this consideration to settle. But to be clear, the ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges) was not part of the decision to settle nor was it involved in the decision making process," said the chairman.

According to Lizama, the ACCJC's prime concern is that the college is meeting accreditation standards and eligibility requirements and that the Board of Regents is working to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution.

in probation fees, and \$100 in court costs.

The suspended lawyer was ordered to perform 200 hours of community work service, submit to an alcohol abuse evaluation and treatment at the Community Guidance Center. He is prohibited from possessing or consuming any alcoholic beverages during his three-year probation.

According to the factual basis of the agreement, on July 29, 2012 on Saipan, Atalig grabbed rocks and a PVC pipe and offered or attempted to strike them at two minor children.

Police arrested the suspended lawyer on July 29, 2012 shortly after the incident that happened at his residence in Papago.

In May 2012, Wiseman suspended Atalig and attorney Reynaldo O. Yana from practicing law in the CNMI for refusing to return \$1.1 million in attorneys' fees that the two obtained from the Angel Malite estate.

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Sanford Ltd. may face \$3M fine in A. Samoa case

PAGO PAGO, American Samoa (The Samoa News/PIR)—The U.S. Justice Department has recommended that among other things, New Zealand based Sanford Ltd. be given a criminal penalty of \$3 million with a portion of that money designated as community service to benefit the marine sanctuary in American Samoa, according to federal court documents.

A jury at the federal court in Washington D.C. last August convicted Sanford of dumping oil waste into U.S. waters outside American Samoa and falsifying records. The charges stem from the company's fishing vessel San Nikunau's visits to Pago Pago over the years. The company was convicted on six of the seven counts.

The jury also convicted James Pogue, a chief engineer on the San Nikunau, of falsification of records for stating that

required pollution control prevention equipment had been used when it had not. He was also convicted of failure to maintain an accurate oil record book as required by U.S. anti-pollution law. He was acquitted on a conspiracy charge.

The defendants were originally scheduled for sentencing last November but that was continued to Jan. 11 this year.

Last week, the Justice Department filed its 18-page sentencing recommendation with the federal court:

- Criminal penalty of \$3 million of which \$500,000 shall be designated as community service payable to the National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation for the benefit of marine sanctuaries in and around American Samoa;

- A period of probation of five years; and

- A prohibition on Sanford ves-

sels calling on U.S. ports—including American Samoa—during the entire period of probation with the option, after one year, of lifting the prohibition on entry if Sanford implements an Environmental Compliance Plan satisfactory to the court.

The government argued that for at least ten years, Sanford Ltd. knowingly and routinely illegally discharged oil waste from San Nikunau and falsified the vessel's Oil Record Book. During this time, Sanford Ltd. was able to sell its tuna from the San Nikunau in Pago Pago, American Samoa, and earn nearly \$23 million.

"A significant sentence in this case will make clear that the United States takes its obligations under MARPOL seriously—and so should mariners and companies that own and operate ships," prosecutors argued. (MAR-

POL is the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and the U.S. is a signatory on the document.)

Additionally, a criminal penalty of \$3 million will help to deter not only Sanford Ltd. from engaging in future criminal activity, but also other fishing companies calling on American Samoa.

The government contends that Sanford "clearly has the ability to pay" the \$3 million considering its annual profits is about NZ\$22 million per year (which equates to US\$18 million). The government cited news reports from New Zealand on the annual profits.

Considering that the criminal activity on the San Nikunau was ongoing and continuous for nearly a decade, "it is reasonable that the fine disgorge some amount of profit from Sanford Ltd.," the government argued.

According to the government, Sanford has already set aside \$3 million to pay the monetary penalty and is pre-

pared to move on, according to its December 18, 2012 Annual Report.

"This fine is proportionate to the severity of the crimes of conviction," said prosecutors.

The Justice Department says that probation has been handed out before in similar cases and believes that Sanford should be given a probation period of five years, during which time Sanford be banned from operating any of its vessels in United States waters.

"A ban is appropriate because it punishes Sanford Ltd. because it cannot profit from commercial activity in the United States while at the same time deterring other shipping companies that desire to engage in commerce in the United States from violating MARPOL," the government argued.

After the first year of probation, Sanford Ltd. could be permitted to enter the waters of the United States if it implements an Environmental Compliance Plan (ECP) that is satisfactory to the Court, the government said.

DRIVER

From Page 1

judge David Wiseman issued a warrant for the arrest of Kim and imposed a \$100,000 cash bail.

Tarkong said DPS acting commissioner Ambrosio Ogomoro also confirmed that that on Saturday, Jan. 12, hikers discovered Kim's van—a silver/aluminum 2012 Toyota Sienna with license plate AED-281—abandoned in a secluded area near Obyan Beach.

Police officers followed up on the hikers' tip and recovered the van on Saturday before 2pm at the end of a winding gravel road.

Investigators noticed that the damage on the van was consistent with the accident.

The van was towed to a secured area where crime scene technicians processed it for evidence.

Tarkong said Kim left the island on Jan. 3 or two days after the incident, but returned on Monday, Jan. 14.

Tarkong said police are searching for Kim, who is confirmed to be on island, but has yet to be located.

"Acting commissioner Ogomoro commends the hard work of all investigators and people involved in this case," Tarkong said.

Investigators from DPS Traffic Section and Thief Apprehension Select Coalition conducted the investigation with the assistance from Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Investigators said that, on Jan. 1, 2013 at night, the Toyota Sienna van was traveling north on the outer lane

when it struck 19-year-old Jefferson Kiauol Keju, dragging him about 50 feet. The van did not stop.

After the van sped away, a Toyota Hilux 4x4 pickup truck later ran over the victim. The driver, a 22-year-old Aniceto Ogomoro Jr., stopped and offered assistance to the victim.

Police said shortly before Keju was struck by the two vehicles, two men chased him and assaulted him on the outer-bound lane of Middle Road in front of LJ Market.

An ambulance transported the victim to the Commonwealth Health Center, where he was pronounced dead the following day, Jan. 2.

Police later arrested Herman Fital, 34, and Felix Kileleman Jr., 19, after investigation showed they were the ones who chased and assaulted the victim.

FUND

From Page 1

With the current trajectory, the Fund has predicted that assets will be zero on March 1, 2014.

Under the first option, Tang said the CNMI government and its autonomous agencies should enter a workout agreement with the Fund.

Tang said the agreement should include the following elements—defer and/or reduce benefits to Fund members, increase annual contributions by government and autonomous agencies, and infusion of cash to catch up government's contributions.

Under the second option, the lawyer said if can agree on a restructuring plan, the receiver will implement the plan.

If they cannot agree on a restructuring plan, Tang said the receiver will liquidate the Fund's assets.

The Fund will "self-liquidate" due to inability to quickly determine liquidation amounts, she said, suggesting that generally it takes one year to fully liquidate.

Tang, however, clarified that liquidation is not a complete solution because once the Fund is depleted or has no more assets, the unfunded liabilities will be a liability of the government's general fund.

Tang also discussed in the report the problems with payment of Public 17-82 refund and regular interest payments.

The payment of Public Law 17-82 refund in the amount of \$113 million, she pointed out, requires accurate data but that the Fund's computer system are deficient and date is unreliable.

She underscored the importance of completing the computation of all applicants before any payout is made to ensure there are sufficient funds to pay all applicants.

On payment of regular interest, Tang said this requires accurate and reliable data, which are not readily available at the Fund.

The lawyer said calculation of regular interest needs to be based on a time-weighted methodology which requires recording of time of contribution.

Tang said should there be verification if there are funds which to pay "regular interest."

At Tuesday's hearing, Dylan Porter of Dylan-Buck Consultants LLC also presented to the court their preview valuation of the Fund using the recently released Governmental Accounting Standards Board's Statements Nos. 67 and 68.

Porter predicts the Fund's depletion on Nov. 1, 2016 for Case 1 and on March 1, 2014 for Case 2.

IMPEACHMENT

From Page 1

peachment resolution vote "yes," then the process would move to the Senate for trial in early February.

House minority bloc leader George Camacho (R-Saipan) is hoping that the resolution "will receive a fair and open discussion." He said he's pleased that a new panel will have to review and critic each article.

"I hope that most members have yet to decide on their vote when it hits the floor. Otherwise, having a review panel would be futile at best. I just wish for a thorough review by the members prior to voting and to come up with their conclusion after such review," Camacho told *Saipan Tribune*.

Two of the members of the impeachment panel will be from the four-member minority bloc, which is expected to decide on the matter today.

Sablan, who was also a member of the impeachment panel last year, said the impeachment panel might hold its first formal meeting on Wednesday, a day after the House's scheduled Tuesday session wherein the impeachment resolution would be formally introduced.

"The timeframe should be substantially shorter than the 30 days during the previous Legislature. A realistic target date is no later than end of the month," Sablan said in an interview.

Sablan said the impeachment panel pretty much has all the evidence it needs to support the articles of impeachment, from the work of the previous committee, including subpoenaed

documents, oral testimony, and videotaped proceedings and hearings.

House Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero (IR-Saipan) convened a leadership meeting yesterday afternoon wherein he finalized the chairmanship of the impeachment panel, which he chaired during the 17th Legislature.

Besides Sablan, the other members of the new impeachment committee from the leadership are Vice Speaker Frank Dela Cruz (IR-Saipan), Rep. Ray Tebuteb (IR-Saipan), Rep. Edmund Villagomez (Cov-Saipan), and Rep. Chris Leon Guerrero (Cov-Saipan). Just like Sablan, Dela Cruz and Tebuteb were also members of the previous impeachment panel.

Villagomez said he expects that the panel will conduct itself "professionally and in a respectable manner, to act based on facts and not on emotion."

The minority bloc will be deciding today which of their members will serve on the impeachment committee.

"We will decide as a group," Camacho said.

The speaker said although he is not a member of the impeachment committee *per se*, he could always participate in the meetings as a speaker.

Deleon Guerrero reiterated that the impeachment committee's report would be the basis for the full House members' decision, and will become evidence during the trial at the Senate. This early, the Senate is already preparing for such eventuality.

The number of sponsors to date—16—is more than enough to impeach the governor because only at least 14 "yes" votes in the 20-member House are needed to impeach him and move

the process to the Senate for trial.

The Fital administration itself said earlier that the governor recognizes he is up against a supermajority in the House, and "the number of cosponsors pretty much indicates that the process will move up to the Senate."

The 26-page resolution has three new allegations in addition to the ones retained from the previous resolution, referring to the governor's failure to appoint a Department of Public Safety commissioner, a Department of Public Lands secretary, and a Department of Public Works secretary. Deleon Guerrero said the governor willfully and continuously ignores the law.

Among the articles of impeachment are in connection with Fital's use of a federal inmate temporarily taken out of prison to give him a massage at his house during the wee hours in January 2010, the award of an almost \$400,000 sole-source ARRA management contract to a former Cabinet official within days of resignation in 2010, failure to remove a former attorney general after it became clear that the AG used public funds and other resources for a political campaign or gathering, and the signing of a 25-year, \$190.8-million power purchase agreement with Saipan Development LLC.

Fital is so far the only governor in CNMI history to be the subject of a pre-filed and/or introduced impeachment resolution. Some of the governor's critics, however, continue to call on him to step down to spare everyone the time, resources, and effort to impeach and convict him.

RETIREMENT

From Page 1

The study says the Fund's resources could be depleted by March 1, 2014 if refunds are paid and employer and employee contributions are not paid, or it could be depleted by Nov. 1, 2016 if the refunds are not paid and employee and employer contributions are paid.

Taitano and other lawmakers have reservations about these projections.

Rep. Richard Seman (R-Saipan) said lawmakers and the Fund's consultant can spend the whole day discussing projections but at the end of the day, what matters the most is working on solutions to prolong the pension agency's lifespan.

Taitano said the special committee is working on these solutions, and is encouraging the cooperation and input from stakeholders.

He said he's aware that temporary benefit cuts may not be popular among retirees, but it's one of the best ways to

save the Fund. He also said his panel will work with the Commonwealth Development Authority and the Fund on the issue of floating a bond and reviewing the CNMI's credit rating.

House and Senate members took turns asking Porter of Buck Consultants during yesterday's presentation. However, the presentation and question-and-answer came and went without a unified position from lawmakers on how to deal with the Fund crisis.

Besides Taitano, the other members of the House Special Committee on Fund issues are Floor Leader Ralph Demapan (Cov-Saipan), and Reps. Tony Sablan (IR-Saipan), Ray Tebuteb (IR-Saipan), Cris Leon Guerrero (Cov-Saipan), Tony Agulto (IR-Saipan), and Larry Deleon Guerrero (IR-Saipan).

Taitano said another proposal is to cut disability benefits—by having these Fund members refund their contributions to the pension agency and go to the Social Security Administration instead for supplementary security income eligibility.

Govendo dismisses new criminal case filed against Miah

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

It was supposed to be a police sting operation against controversial Mohammed Jahangir Miah for allegedly receiving a stolen video camera. It turned out, however, that the camera belonged to the police and was never stolen after all.

As a result, the 38-year-old Miah yesterday got away with another criminal case that the Office of the Attorney General filed against him.

At a preliminary hearing, Superior Court associate judge Kenneth L. Govendo found no

probable cause that the crimes of receiving stolen property and violating the terms of release in other cases were committed.

Govendo basically agreed with Miah's counsel, Colin Thompson, that there was no crime of receipt of stolen property as the camera was not a stolen property.

As the viability of the other charges depend on a finding of probable cause in the charge of receiving stolen property, the charges of violating the terms of release were subsequently dismissed.

In dismissing the case, Govendo stated he does not

want to discourage the OAG from going after people who received stolen property as it is an important crime to investigate.

At the hearing, chief prosecutor Peter Prestley called a detective to the witness stand who narrated the circumstances leading to Miah's arrest a few days ago.

According to the prosecution, two persons who were earlier arrested for burglary agreed to help the police in finding other people engaged in receiving stolen items.

The two persons claimed that Miah was one of those receiving stolen items. The two then agreed to become the police's cooperating sources during a sting operation against Miah.

Thompson told *Saipan Tribune* that during the sting operation, police handed to the two cooperating sources a video camera that belongs to the Department of Public Safety.

Thompson said police were able to obtain an eavesdropping warrant from the Superior Court so one of the cooperating

sources was wearing a recording wire.

The defense lawyer said the police then took the cooperating sources to Miah's house.

Thompson said according to the cooperating sources, they told Miah that they had a stolen camera that they wanted to sell to him.

Thompson said the two claimed that Miah agreed to buy it and handed \$10.

The lawyer said when the two cooperating sources left the house, police arrested Miah.

At the hearing, Thompson argued that there was no stolen property because the prop-

erty belongs to the police and it was always in the custody of the police.

"At all time it was never stolen so there's no stolen property so the judge agreed," Thompson said.

"We think the judge made the right decision. Because the crime was receipt of stolen property and there was no stolen property," he pointed out.

In October 2012, police also arrested Miah for allegedly receiving stolen items belonging to William S. Reyes Elementary School.

Superior Court Associate Judge Perry B. Inos, however, dismissed the charges during a preliminary hearing after finding no probable cause to warrant the filing of the case.

In July 2012, the U.S. District Court for the NMI acquitted Miah for lack of corroborating evidence in a case of conspiracy to forge stale CNMI tax refund checks.

Miah is awaiting sentencing in federal court for conspiracy to unlawfully produce driver's licenses.



Miah

Korean investor says lawmaker sitting on proposed casino bill

By **CLARISSA V. DAVID**
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A Korean businessman maintained that Rep. Teresita A. Santos (Ind-Rota) is sitting on a proposed local casino bill which the latter does not understand, causing delays on a good casino project that could boost the economy of the southern island and the CNMI in general.

Jae Hong, vice president of JMSH, LLC which owns Rota Resort & Country Club, said in an email that Santos' "baseless misunderstanding" stems from her absence in any of the meetings and seminars hosted throughout last year to clarify the matter.

Hong's company announced in September 2012 their plans to build the \$170-million casino and hotel project inside the Rota Resort & Country Club but noted that "small issues" regarding existing casino rules and regulations get in the way of the start of project construction.

Santos, in a letter published in local newspapers last Friday, claimed that the proposed casino bills forwarded to her for introduction are not in the best interest of the people of Rota and against the spirit of the Rota Casino Act of 2007 as it seeks to lower the gambling revenue tax and the gross gaming revenue for specific promotional costs.

However, Hong argued that the purpose of the amendment bill is to correct the definition of Gross Revenue in the law and not to reduce the casino tax from 10 percent to 3.3 percent.

"It's not fair and right to challenge the ratified casino tax rate by reducing it to 3.3 percent. But every language is not perfect. The definition of Gross Revenue is not in accordance with general casino industry language. It needs to be corrected," Hong told *Saipan Tribune*.

He disclosed that meetings were scheduled last year, including a special seminar requested by Rota Mayor Melchor Mendiola which featured a third party casino expert invited at cost to explain the casino industry and casino terminology.

Hong noted that concerned

parties like the casino commissioners, the mayor, senators, and administrators attended the seminar, but not Santos. He said he personally requested a meeting with the lawmaker but was rejected.

"Nobody—no people, no politicians, no administration officials, and no investors—

mentioned tax reduction, except for Rep. Santos who has never attended any meeting or seminars in this matter, either intentionally or negligently," he said.

"Rep. Santos, the one who is supposed to work together with local people, does not understand the context of the bill and is not up to date with the current

issue," added Hong.

He emphasized that the people of Rota approved the establishment of the casino industry in the southernmost island of the Northern Marianas to create hundreds of new jobs and infuse millions of dollars in taxes to stimulate the local economy.

"Rota Casino Act was ratified

in 2007, but there's no casino on Rota, yet," said Hong. "Ultimately, it's a sad story."

According to Hong, Santos should have thought about the people of Rota first rather than being political.

Just a small communication can solve a conflict and most of misunderstanding. Big opportunity starts from a small talk, too," he added.



CNMI GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES 2013 Health Insurance Rates

LAST CHANCE: Application Deadline is Jan. 18th

		MEDICAL RATES	MEDICAL & DENTAL RATES
CLASS	ACTIVE GOVT	Per Pay Period	Per Pay Period
Single	STAYWELL	\$67.00 & no deductible	\$93.00
	AETNA High Option AETNA Low Option	\$82.45 + \$300 deductible No longer available StayWell Maximum Annual savings = \$702 + Potential Refund of \$576	No Dental Plan
Couple	STAYWELL	\$134.00 & no deductible	\$186.00
	AETNA High Option AETNA Low Option	\$169.02 + \$600 deductible No longer available StayWell Maximum Annual savings = \$1,511 + Potential Refund of \$1,050	No Dental Plan
Family	STAYWELL	\$215.00 & no deductible	\$272.00
	AETNA High Option AETNA Low Option	\$263.83 + \$900 deductible No longer available StayWell Maximum Annual savings = \$2,170 + Potential Refund of \$1,586	No Dental Plan

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Non-network providers at 40% of eligible charges

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Single = \$4,000; Family = \$8,000

Contact StayWell at 323-4260/61/62 or elplinske@staywellguam.com for more information



MONETH G. DEPOSA
Visiting official from the Office of Head Start, program specialist Richard Ybarra (second left), gestures during yesterday's special meeting of the Board of the Education where he informed BOE and education officials of the upcoming full review of the CNMI Head Start Program.

Feds to review local Head Start program

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Board of Education is up for a full review and assessment this year which result will determine if the federally funded Head Start program will remain in the hands of the Public School System.

Richard Ybarra, visiting official from the Office of Head Start Region XI, made this announcement to BOE and PSS officials during a special meeting yesterday at the BOE office.

Ybarra's group is conducting its annual site visit on island for the Head Start program, which funds may potentially be placed in competitive process if full review yields unsatisfactory result for the feds.

Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of children ages birth to 5 from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development. The Office of Head Start, within the Administration of Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services, awards grants to provide comprehensive services to specific communities such as the CNMI.

Under the designation renewal system (DRS), a regulation that became effective in December 2011, specific conditions were set that HHS will consider when determining whether a grantee is delivering a high-quality and comprehensive program and, thus, whether the grantee may be renewed without having to compete for continued funding.

In particular, if a grantee is found to meet any of those conditions during the time periods specified in the regulation, then that grantee will be required to compete for continued funding.

According to Ybarra, this regulation was set to see "more accountability" in handling the program. Failure to see this objective in the upcoming review will place a grantee in designated renewal system where it will begin compete for the awards to continue operate the program.

But this early, BOE chair Herman T. Guerrero and Commissioner of Education Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D., welcomed

the federal assessment and confident on the smooth and well-managed operation of the program.

Guerrero admitted that in 2000, PSS almost lost the administration of the Head Start program due to some deficiencies that were not properly relayed to the board and the then PSS administration. As a result of this discovery, the then program director was removed.

"We have seen the progression over these years. We have turned the Head Start program around and I am confident that we have a very good program and I don't see any other local agencies and groups that can best manage this program...but PSS," Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune* after yesterday's meeting, adding that there's no way the federal government will allow the closure of the program in the CNMI.

According to Sablan, the upcoming review is part of the tri-annual review from the OHS. In the event there might be deficiencies uncovered during the review, the COE is hopeful that PSS would be allowed to clarify and take corrective actions.

She labeled the DRS regulation as critical but is confident that "PSS is very much capable in overseeing and implementing the program." She cited the many progress and achievements of the Head Start program under the umbrella of BOE.

Ybarra informed BOE yesterday that the team for the full review usually announces its visit 30 days prior to the schedule. He, however, cannot immediately say when this will happen for CNMI.

His message to the BOE—which is fully accountable for the program—is to get ready and make its records straight for the federal review. Ybarra said he was pleased to see the local Head Start program's progress, 10 years after it was cited for deficiencies. The review will cover all aspects of the program operation including fiscal, policies, personnel, audit, and others. Each year, the Head Start program is mandated to serve 462 children and has an annual budget of \$1.8 million of which over \$300,000 are from the local side.



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Government Group Health Insurance Open Enrollment

January 14, 2013 – February 15, 2013

Notice of Change in Premiums

New plan premiums for health insurance members, effective January 01, 2013:

EMPLOYEES PREMIUM PLAN COVERAGE	ENROLLMENT CODE	Employee Share	Employer Share	Applicable Deductible
Single	(1)	\$82.45	\$82.45	\$300.00
Couple	(2)	\$169.02	\$169.02	\$600.00
Couple including Domestic Partner	(2A)	\$255.58	\$82.45	\$600.00
Family	(3)	\$263.83	\$263.83	\$900.00
Family including Domestic Partner	(3A)	\$346.28	\$181.38	\$900.00

RETIREES PREMIUM* PLAN COVERAGE	ENROLLMENT CODE	Employee Share	Employer Share	Applicable Deductible
Single	(1)	\$89.32	\$89.32	\$300.00
Couple	(2)	\$183.10	\$183.10	\$600.00
Couple including Domestic Partner	(2A)	\$276.88	\$89.32	\$600.00
Family	(3)	\$285.81	\$285.81	\$900.00
Family including Domestic Partner	(3A)	\$375.13	\$196.49	\$900.00

*Retirees' premiums appear higher than active employees' premiums due to less pay periods (24 pay periods for retirees vs. 26 pay periods for active employees).

During Open Enrollment, active government employees and **retirees currently enrolled** in the Plan will have the following opportunities:

- An employee not currently covered by AGB may apply for coverage for him/ her/herself and dependent(s)
- If you are currently covered and desire to make changes, you may change Plan C Coverage to add or remove dependent(s)
- Retirees currently enrolled in the plan may make changes

If you are currently covered by AGB and do not wish to make any changes you do not need to reenroll; coverage will automatically continue. However, if you are currently covered by AGB and wish to terminate coverage, you must complete a GGHI Enrollment/Waiver/Change Request form or coverage will automatically continue.

GGHI Enrollment/Waiver/Change Request forms are available at the NMI Retirement Fund offices, or online at www.nmiretirement.com. Approved enrollments and changes selected during Open Enrollment shall take effect January 1, 2013. The new premiums should be reflected on employees' paychecks for the pay period beginning January 1, 2013 and for retirees' pension for the pay period beginning January 15, 2013. Retirees who were charged at the 2012 rates on their January 15, 2013 pensions will receive a credit on their next pension check that reflects the difference between the 2012 and 2013 rates.

Aetna representatives will be on-island to conduct presentations and answer questions:

Rota (via video teleconference): January 22, 2013

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Location: NMC Campus

Tinian: January 17, 2013

Time: 10:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Location: Tinian Gymnasium

Saipan: January 15, 16, 18, 21 and 22, 2013

Time: 9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Location: Multi-Purpose Center

Business community urged to participate in Adopt-A-Place initiative

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The chairman of the Saipan &

Bordallo participates in US-Japan-S. Korea legislative exchange programs

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Congresswoman Madeleine Z. Bordallo recently returned from Seoul, South Korea, where she participated in the 48th session of the U.S.-Japan Bilateral Exchange Program and the 14th session of the U.S.-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Exchange Program. She met with several members of the National Diet of Japan and the South Korean National Assembly to discuss recent elections in the United States, Japan and South Korea, as well as the U.S. military rebalance in the Asia-Pacific region. She was joined by Congressman Mike Honda of California, Congressman F. James Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin, and Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas.

The U.S.-Japan-South Korea Legislative Exchange Program is sponsored by The George Washington University's Sigur Center for Asian Studies. It brings together Members of the

Northern Islands Municipal Council on Tuesday urged the business community to participate in its Adopt-a-Place initia-

U.S. Congress and Japanese Diet members on a semi-annual basis for in-depth discussions on a broad range of political, economic, and security issues affecting U.S.-Japan bilateral relations. It was later expanded to include South Korea.

"I always appreciate the opportunity to meet with members of the Japanese Diet and the South Korean National Assembly to discuss our countries' trilateral relations," said Congresswoman Bordallo. "We talked about our countries' domestic policies, security, economic and trade issues, as



Bordallo

well as the realignment of U.S. Marines in our region. The Pacific realignments are critical to improving national security and diplomatic relations in the region. We have made progress in keeping the Guam build-up on track, and I am working to ensure that the supplemental environmental impact statement will move forward in a timely fashion in 2013." (PR)

tive which promotes a safe and healthy living environment for the public.

Ramon B. Camacho said in his remarks at the Rotary Club of Saipan meeting at Hyatt Regency Saipan that Adopt-a-Place is a result of the development and expansion of the Neighborhood Watch and Village Revitalization efforts.

Camacho said the main goal of Adopt-a-Place is to bring together the business sector and other members of the community in maintaining their des-

ignated places, thus instilling a sense of ownership and care among participants.

He said that through the program, eyesores like overgrown vegetation are removed, which he believes would reduce the incidence of unacceptable or criminal activities in the island.

"The more participants we have in the program, the lesser problems we're going to be seeing," added Camacho.

He said that unlike the Department of Public Works' Adopt-a-Highway, Adopt-a-

Place is narrowed down to an area that is less than a mile and is "very manageable" by any group that would take on the responsibility in maintaining their own area.

Camacho disclosed that he initially invited religious organizations, which gladly took on the challenge. Involved in the program are Iglesia ni Cristo, Jesus is Lord, and Life in the Son.

Other groups such as business establishments and private families followed suit, and Camacho said he plans to meet

with various ethnic groups and invite them to participate in the program. He noted that Tournament of Champions donated traffic cones and vests for those who will take part in the Adopt-a-Place cleanup.

Camacho said interested participants may visit the council in Chalan Kanoa next to the post office to check on the road map, select their designated area, and fill out a waiver form. For more information, call 664-2700 or 2701.

5.5 earthquake jolts Saipan

Saipan residents experienced a mild earthquake at a little past noon yesterday when a tremor, measuring 5.5 in the Richter scale, was recorded off Pagan.

The Emergency Management Office, in close consultation with US Geological Survey Hawaii, said the earthquake occurred at exactly 12:38pm yesterday afternoon.

The agency said the preliminary magnitude of the temblor was 5.5 on a Richter scale and it struck at latitude 17.432 and longitude of 145.988. This is about 51 miles south, south east of Pagan.

EMO said no watches or warnings were issued for the Northern Marianas, as no tsunami was generated based on earthquake and historical tsunami data. (EMO)



CLARISSA V. DAVID

Saipan & Northern Islands Municipal Council chair Ramon B. Camacho talks about the Adopt-a-Place program as Rotary Club of Saipan president Pete Shilling looks on during Tuesday's meeting at Hyatt Regency Saipan.

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PIC celebrates Russian New Year

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With its white and silver trimmings, Pacific Islands Club's Magellan Restaurant was transformed on Jan. 14 to reflect the atmosphere of the North Wonderland as the hotel hosted its annual Russian New Year party.

Close to 200 guests comprised of tourists and members of the local Russian community gathered at the party to enjoy the traditional festive holiday based on the Julian calendar.

"PIC is the only hotel on island that organizes and hosts such wonderful, traditional parties for Russian visitors of Saipan yearly, giving Russian guests from PIC and other hotels as well as the local Russian community to enjoy the holiday season in Russian style which we're accustomed to, even while being far away from home and on vacation," said Anna Yushkova, PIC Russian sales and marketing manager.

This year's theme was Northern Lights, featuring pioneers or inhabitants of the North Pole with their customs and traditions, inspiring Russian celebrities Konstantin Pospelov and Vilatii Rogozin to create a unique and entertaining program highlighting song performances, dance contests, and other fun games and activities for revelers young and old.

Yushkova said that guests enjoyed traditional New Year greetings, had photo opportunities, and received various gifts and souvenirs from Ded Moroz as Russian Santa Claus and Snegurochka, Santa Claus' granddaughter.

Guests also participated in a raffle draw that served as a fundraiser for the Children's Hospital in Vladivostok, Russia. Valuable prizes included exciting gifts from local tour operators, restaurants, shopping centers, jewelry shops, and hotels.

"We are looking forward to next year's holiday season and greatest celebrations of the Orthodox Christmas and Old Style New Year and have a lot of fun here in PIC again," said Yushkova.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

From left to right, Pacific Islands Club's Rochelle Valdizno, Rona Bautista, a Russian guest, Mary Jhane Licerio, and John Dacanay.



Anna Yushkova, Pacific Islands Club Russian sales and marketing manager, is flanked by Russian celebrities Konstantin Pospelov and Vilatii Rogozin.



▲ Dwayne Castro, who is dressed up as Santa Claus, and granddaughter Snegurochka played by Yulia Aleksenko smile for the camera with Anatasia Pobochenko and Evgenia Pobochenko.

Russian guests play a modified trip to Jerusalem using penguins instead of chairs.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Jan. 17, 2001

Senate okays release of \$50M for CIP

The Senate passed yesterday a measure appropriating \$50 million for various Capital Improvement Projects following the release of the proceeds from the \$60 million bond flotation. Of the \$50 million fund, \$25 million will come from the proceeds of the bond while the remaining \$25 million will come from the Covenant Section 702 Funding as specified under House Bill 12-130. At least ten projects for the First Senatorial District of Rota amounting to \$18, 455,000 will be carried out, nine projects from the Second Senatorial District of Tinian amounting to \$11, 945,000 and the projects to be identified in order of priority in the Third Senatorial District of Saipan will get a total of \$19, 750, 000.

Fed funds subsidized PSS payroll

Federal assistance enabled the Public School System to stay afloat in its Fiscal Year 2000 personnel expenditure with a total of \$6.4 million expended to subsidize the PSS payroll out of the \$17.2 million appropriated federal budget. The remaining \$8.6 million was obligated to the school system's operating expenses during the previous fiscal year. According to the Fiscal and Budget Office, while many of the federal grants received by PSS are primarily for supplemental operating needs, relying heavily on federal resources to finance the local personnel was not expected.

Jan. 17, 2002

PSS to push for increase in federal funds

Still reeling from a financial crisis compounded by the September 11 attacks, the Public School System is poised to make an appeal for more federal assistance, pending executive action on a US measure that will reauthorize federal funds to insular areas and states. The PSS is upbeat in receiving funding increases from the CNMI's estimated \$5.4 million share under the US appropriation legislation, which will be made available in July through September this year. As one among educational institutions in the insular area hardest hit by the impacts of the global recession, the PSS is hoping to win the US Department of Education's "sympathy."

Torres linking up with US embassies

The House Committee on US and Foreign Affairs will be linking up with the different American embassies throughout the Asia-Pacific region in a bid to tap the resources of the federal government in these countries in promoting the Northern Marianas. Rep. William S. Torres, who will chair the committee in the 13th House of Representatives, pointed out that this will not only save the Commonwealth money but the CNMI's promotion effort it will also be supported by the clout of the American government. "By the end of the month, we will be touching base with the different US embassies throughout the Pacific, especially in Asia and probably including Australia and New Zealand, to request their help in terms of using their facilities in promoting the CNMI in those countries," Torres said.

Jan. 17, 2003

College grant faces \$1.3B shortfall

A federal grant that provides loans to college students-including those from the Northern Marianas College-reportedly faces some \$1.3 billion shortfall. NMC president Kenneth Wright said the financial aid program, called Pell Grant, gives a substantial amount to NMC. "We hope that it's addressed soon and that it would have less impact here." Wright is hopeful that the federal authorities would also take into account the local community's needs for financial grants. "A lot of NMC students benefit from this program," he said.

Disaster loans to fund rebuilding of typhoon-safe homes and structures

Owners of homes and businesses damaged by supertyphoon Pongsona are busy picking up the pieces of their disrupted lives and livelihoods. For many disaster victims, this is just the first step in the rebuilding process. However, nobody wants to see a newly rebuilt home or business destroyed by the next typhoon. Accordingly, federal disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration to repair or replace property damaged by the supertyphoon will include additional funds to cover the extra cost of building typhoon-safe structures.



Andersen Middle School students visit MARC Library

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Andersen Middle School students visited the UOG MARC Library to learn more about the history of Guam.

Eighth-grade students at Andersen Middle School recently visited the Richard F. Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center Library at the University of Guam to conduct

research on Guam's history in anticipation of the Annual Guam History Day Competition in March.

According to AMS eighth grade teacher and UOG

alumna, Mary Williams, information on Guam history is sometimes hard to find using only online sources. "The MARC Library is an excellent resource on the history of

Guam and Micronesia for my students."

For more information about the Richard F. Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center visit www.uog.edu/marc. (PR)

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Aquarius Beach Tower to hold 'Beach Clean-Up Day' tomorrow

Aquarius Beach Tower will be having a "Beach Clean-Up Day" tomorrow, January 18, 2013 from 8am to 9:30am. The community is encouraged to stop by the hotel and help us clean up Chalan Kanoa Beach. Bring your recycled bags for trash pickup. For more information, call the hotel at 235-6025. (PR)

SVES Family Game Night tonight

San Vicente Elementary School will hold the first campus-wide Family Game Night tonight, Jan. 17. Join us from 5pm to 6pm for a ton of fun activities such as musical chairs, dodgeball, ropes, and "Are you smarter than a 5th grader." Parents are encouraged to also attend the PTA meeting in SVES cafeteria immediately following the Game Night.

For more information, contact the school at 237-3791. (SVES)

Survivors, caregivers support meeting

All people facing cancer, their family members, and caregivers are invited to the next Commonwealth Cancer Association's monthly support meeting scheduled for today, Jan. 17, 2013, at the Hyatt Regency Saipan's Chamolinian Room starting at 5:30pm. This month's support meeting guest speaker will be Nola Hix, MMAC subcommittee survivors' chairperson. Her presentation will focus on MMAC 2013. To RSVP or for more information, call the CCA at 682-0050 or email at ccamarianas@gmail.com. (CCA)

MHS Class of '83 sets general meeting

The Marianas High School Class of 1983 will have a general meeting tomorrow, Jan. 18, 2013, at Minatchom Atdao

Pavilion, Susupe, Civic Center Beach, at 7pm. For more information, call Tonnei Camacho at 483-9665. (PR)

Tinian Municipal Council inauguration reset

This is to inform all guests of the 14th Municipal Council of Tinian and Aguiguan that the Inauguration has been rescheduled to Saturday, Jan. 19, 2013, out of respect for the untimely passing and funeral of a Tinian resident. For more information on the Inaugural schedule, contact the Mayor's Office of Tinian and Aguiguan at (670) 433-1800 or 433-1802. (PR)

CCA to join Massive Bingo Bonanza

The Commonwealth Cancer

Association will be sponsoring a Bingo Spectacular fundraising event in partnership with the Massive Bingo Bonanza on Sunday, Jan. 20, 2013, at the former Fishing Base Complex, across the Horiguchi Building in Garapan. Participants will have the opportunity to vie for a \$1,000 cash payout prize. Tickets are \$20 for one package, each package providing 10 games. The doors will open at 2pm and the games will start at 3pm in the afternoon.

The community is encouraged to come down and enjoy the games, and assist the very worthy cause of facilitating cancer programs in the CNMI. All proceeds from the event will go to CCA. Contact the CCA at 682-0050 or by email at ccamarianas@gmail.com for tickets or for

more information about CCA and its programs. (CCA)

CCA sets general membership meeting

All friends, volunteers, partners, and clients of the Commonwealth Cancer Association and all members of the community are invited to the general membership meeting on Jan. 24, 2013 at 5:30pm at CCA's Conference Room in Guarlo Rai.

The agenda will include the 2012 annual report of the president and treasurer, election of four CCA board members, and an opportunity for public comments. Nominations for board members will be accepted on the floor. For more information, contact CCA at 682-0050 or email ccamarianas@gmail.com. (CCA)



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Phone: (670) 234-6806/7743
Fax: (670) 234-7753

Attorney for Petitioner

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS

SOLEDAD S.
BUENSUCESO-
JUACHON,
Petitioner,

versus

ANTHONY I.
JUACHON,
Respondent.

FCD DI CIVIL
ACTION
NO. 12-0408

SUMMONS

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED
RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Petition for Divorce which is given you herewith, within thirty (30) days after service of this Summons upon you.

YOUR ANSWER SHOULD BE IN WRITING and filed with the Clerk of Court, Guma'Hustisia, Iimwal Aweewe, House of Justice, P.O. Box 500307, Saipan, MP 96950 and served upon petitioner's counsel, Atty. Joe Hill, P.O. Box 500917, Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Petition for Divorce.

By order of the above Court:

Dated this 5th day of August, 2012.

/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court
Superior Court

WANTED:

SINGERS, SONGWRITERS,

COMEDIANS, ARTISTS

ANY TALENTED

INDIVIDUALS WHO WANT

TO SHOW WHAT THEY GOT.

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The U.S. Navy INVITES YOU TO PARTICIPATE in the Mariana Islands Range Complex Airspace Draft EA/OEA

The U.S. Navy has prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment/Overseas Environmental Assessment (EA/OEA) to analyze potential environmental impacts from proposed modifications to military training airspace and sea space in the Mariana Islands Range Complex (MIRC).

PROPOSED ACTION:

The Proposed Action is to modify and extend existing military training airspace and sea space within the MIRC. This action is needed to provide a safer and more efficient training environment and to maintain military readiness.

The Navy analyzed three alternatives in the Draft EA/OEA: (1) No Action Alternative – current training activities; (2) Alternative 1 – modify and extend military airspace for public safety and training efficiency; and (3) Alternative 2 – modify and extend military airspace (similar to Alternative 1) and expand the sea space danger zone around Farallon de Medinilla from 10 nautical miles (nm) to 12 nm.

The Navy conducted a thorough assessment to determine the potential effects the Proposed Action and alternatives may have on environmental resources. The draft assessment indicates there would be no significant impact on the environment from proposed modifications to airspace and sea space.

The Navy requests your input!

- Visit www.MIRCAirspaceEA.com to review the Draft EA/OEA and provide comments
- Attend information sessions and provide comments
- Mail written comments to:
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific
Attention: MIRC Airspace EA/OEA Project Manager
258 Makalapa Drive, Suite 100
Pearl Harbor, HI 96860-3134

Public Open House Information Sessions 5 to 8 p.m.

Jan. 15, 2013
University of Guam
Leon Guerrero School of Business and Public Administration Building,
Anthony Leon Guerrero Multi-Purpose Rm. 129
Mangilao, Guam 96923

Jan. 17, 2013
Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center in
Susupe
Saipan, MP 96950

The Navy welcomes and appreciates your comments on the Draft EA/OEA. Comments must be postmarked or received by **Feb. 4, 2013**, for consideration in the Final EA/OEA.

For more information, visit www.MIRCAirspaceEA.com

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

A 'light footprint' strategy could be the best US option after Western forces leave

Almost two years remain before a NATO-led international military force in Afghanistan is supposed to turn over full security responsibility to the Afghan military. But the Obama administration and its critics are already sparring over the size of the residual U.S. presence that will stay on after 2014.

The administration indicates that it will amount to only a few thousand troops—some officials have even floated the notion that none would remain after 2014—while its critics, including Republicans in Congress, have insisted that at least 10,000 and perhaps three times that number will be necessary to prevent Afghanistan from backsliding into instability.

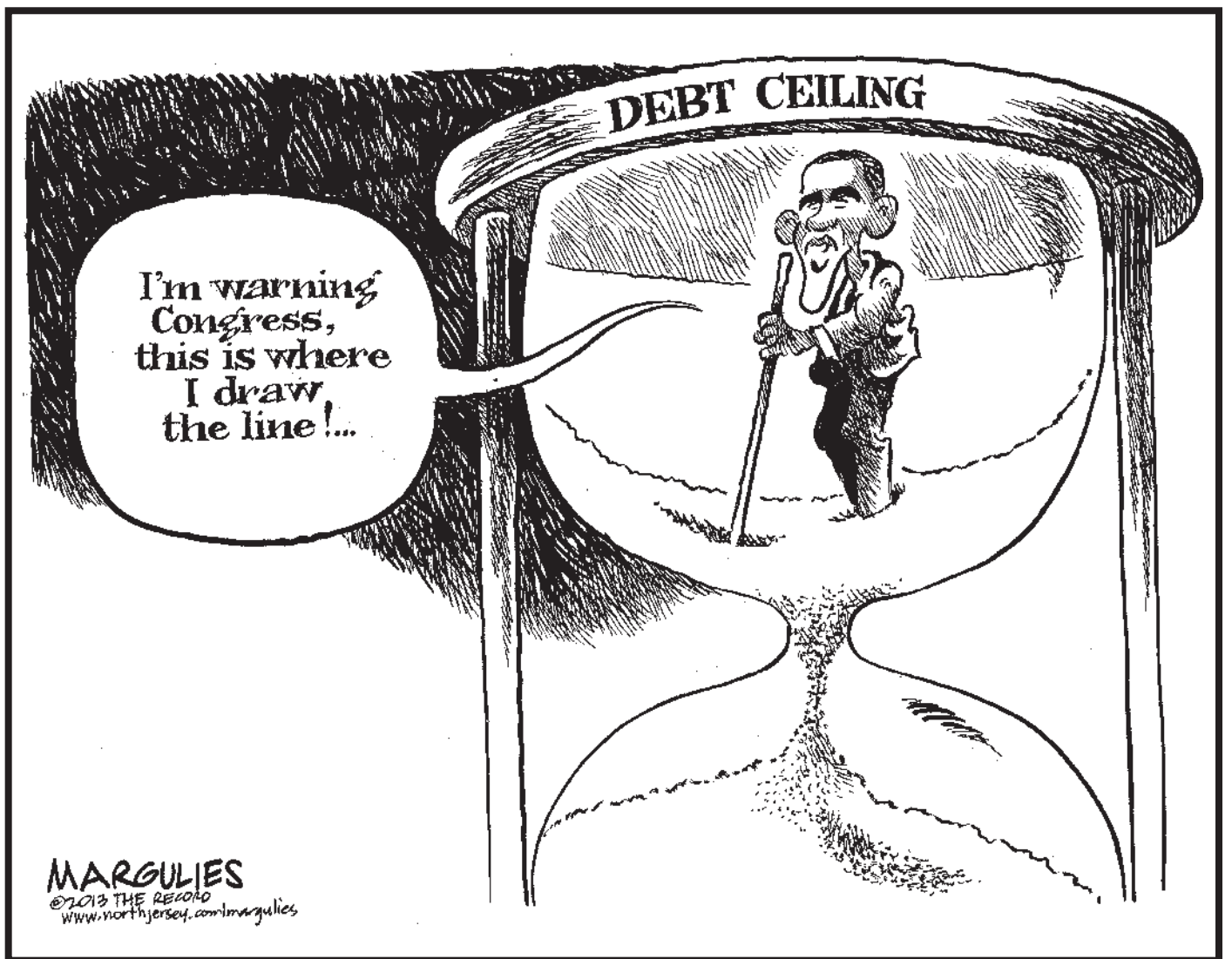
We don't presume to know the precise number of troops that will be necessary in 2015 to ensure that al-Qaida and associated groups can't use Afghan territory to launch further attacks on Americans, the rationale for the U.S. invasion after 9/11. But the Los Angeles Times' David S. Cloud and Alexandra Zavis report that the administration believes it could meet that objective with a "light footprint" strategy—similar to the one it has pursued in Pakistan—emphasizing commando raids and drone missile strikes against al-Qaida fighters.

Both the president and advocates of a large residual force insist that Afghan forces are improving their effectiveness. Ideally that process will continue so that in 2015, the Afghan army can competently prosecute the war against Taliban insurgents without significant support from the U.S. military. Meanwhile, it is to be hoped, the Afghan government will root out the corruption that has undermined its authority.

But if that doesn't occur, as many believe it will not, and the U.S. is still able to mount an effective counter-terrorism effort without many boots on the ground, the light footprint strategy should be implemented. A large residual force might be justifiable if it functioned effectively as a deterrent, as the 28,000 U.S. forces in South Korea do. But U.S. troops in Afghanistan are daily in harm's way. As Obama pointed out in his weekend address, more than 2,000 Americans have given their lives in Afghanistan. More will die this year and next, even if the administration accelerates its withdrawal.

When it invaded Afghanistan in 2011 to overthrow the Taliban regime that had harbored Osama bin Laden, the United States—perhaps unintentionally—assumed a moral obligation to assist that country in its political and economic reconstruction. It is discharging that responsibility and will continue to do so even after Afghans take complete charge of their security. But as Obama also said Saturday, "after more than a decade of war, the nation we need to rebuild is our own."

(c) 2013 Los Angeles Times



In Syria, war is the new normal

By RAJAN MENON
LOS ANGELES TIMES

After 22 months of civil war, in which an estimated 60,000 people have died, Syrian President Bashar Assad gave a defiant speech Sunday that ruled out negotiations with rebel fighters and made clear that he intends to remain in power as long as possible. Assad's words came as no great surprise. Seasoned diplomats, including former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, have tried and failed to broker a peace.

So why does the war drag on? One key reason is that neither side believes it is losing.

The opposition controls a significant amount of territory and has established a presence in large parts of Syria, especially the north and east. It has recently formed a unified political and military structure, winning the recognition of numerous countries. But Assad's government can take comfort in the rebels' failure so far to take any major cities, including the two most important ones, the business center, Aleppo, and the capital, Damascus. The insurgents have received arms and other support from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, which has further emboldened them, yet the regime retains an overwhelming advantage in firepower. With neither side convinced it will lose, neither is ready to stop fighting.

Another reason for the war's continuance has to do with the ambivalence of various Syrian minorities about a future government dominated by a Sunni Arab majority. The Kurds in the northeast, for example, have largely stayed out of the fight, focusing instead on carving out what they hope will be, at minimum, the sort of autonomous region their Iraqi brethren have acquired in the wake of Saddam's Hussein's ouster. It's not that the Kurds like Assad; it's that they assume that the opposition's victory will mean that minorities in the country will be further oppressed. Assad, a member of the Alawite minority—which makes up just 12 percent of the population—needs support from other groups among Syria's dozen or so minorities, who together constitute about a third of the country's population, to retain power, and so has treated them with some deference, something they fear a Sunni Arab-dominated government would not do.

That same reasoning has kept even many Syrian Sunnis

loyal, especially urban professionals, intellectuals and bureaucrats who fear they have less in common with those who might come to power in a new Syria than they do with the current regime. Despite a number of defections, including some by top officials, Assad has been able to salvage enough of a bureaucratic and military apparatus to govern the places he holds and to keep fighting the war.

Assad has also — so far — retained the loyalty of the army and the security services, which has been crucial to his survival. In the recent history of the Middle East, rulers who have lost their hold on the military have also lost control of their countries.

President Zine el-Abidine ben Ali of Tunisia fled once the military high command told him that he had to go, and President Hosni Mubarak was tossed overboard by Egyptian generals who realized that they could not maintain their political and economic power without cutting Mubarak loose. If this pattern had repeated itself in Syria, Assad and his cronies would now be in exile — or dead.

Fear has also contributed to Assad's hold on power. Members of the Alawite ruling circles, who are deeply steeped in blood at this point, have little incentive to push the president toward peace, because they fear brutal score-settling if the Sunni-dominated resistance takes power. Even if a deal could be negotiated that guaranteed them a role in a transitional government, they would worry that such an arrangement would be but an interregnum that precedes an orgy of revenge killings.

So where does this leaves Syria? Not in a good place. The regime does not seem to have lost its taste for bloodshed, and it may even believe that it can fight on indefinitely from Alawite bastions (mainly the coastal area between Latakia and Tartus) even if the opposition is able to take Damascus. The resistance, for its part, has gained battlefield experience the hard way and is a far better fighting force than it was in the early months of the war. It is now better-armed as well, and its international support is growing as Assad's wanes. With neither side feeling pressure to negotiate a settlement involving power-sharing, the Syrian war grinds on.

Rajan Menon is a professor of political science at City College of New York/City University of New York and a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council. He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

EDITORIAL POLICY

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THE ASIA OPPORTUNITY

US is poised to take a leadership role

Emphasizing democratic values in this crucial region

Over the last two years, the Obama administration has focused greater diplomatic attention and military resources on East Asia as part of a policy described as a “pivot” or “rebalancing.” While American leaders are loath to admit it publicly, this is a response to China’s growing influence, particularly Beijing’s territorial claims around its borders. China now has the world’s second-largest economy and a rapidly modernizing military. It is led by a Communist Party that maintains its power by promoting a strong sense of national pride and expectations of China’s continued rise to greatness.

Increasing American military power in the region may be necessary, but it is not sufficient to ensure peace and prosperity in the region. The following ideas should inform America’s Asia policy going forward:

First, American policy must be about more than containing China. Any approach that appears to mimic Cold War containment policies creates equivalence between Washington and Beijing among the peoples of East Asia. America’s formidable soft power comes from the contrasts—not similarities—between the United States and its potential rivals.

Last week, outgoing Defense Secretary Leon Panetta called for “rule of law; open access for all to the global commons of sea, air, space and cyberspace; unimpeded economic development and commerce; and resolving conflict without the use of force.” However, too often the timing and content of Washington’s policies are reactions to China’s military bluster rather than part of a long-term effort to uphold values important to democracies in the region.

Second, “rebalancing” is impossible without allies. Between the United States and China lie Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, all with strong ties to Washington. These three represent the third-, 13th- and 20th-largest economies in the world, and all have strong militaries. Each faces a much more immediate threat from China than does the United States.

Washington’s commitment to the region must not go beyond the willingness of these countries to defend their own interests. The Japanese prime minister’s recent advocacy of greater defense spending is a hopeful sign. Similar commitments should be expected from South Korea and Taiwan. Regional integration is vital. The Obama administration should continue to foster military cooperation among Asian nations and must also advocate more vigorously for the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a free trade agreement consisting primarily of democratic countries.

Third, domestic politics shape international relations in East Asia. Politicians in China, Japan and South Korea use territorial claims to whip up public support. North Korea’s dangerous nuclear ambitions have been driven by three generations of leaders determined to create a state of perpetual crisis to justify their continued rule. Taiwan’s

The CIA’s greatest hits

We got Osama bin Laden—and now we’ll be getting him again on cinema screens across the nation, as “Zero Dark Thirty” hits neighborhood multiplexes. Lauded and criticized, that film’s the talk of the town. Is it also the first of a new genre? If so, here are my five nominations for other CIA films.

Let’s start with the CIA’s 1953 coup against Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh, whose democratically elected government had nationalized the country’s oil industry. It couldn’t be oilier, involving BP in an earlier incarnation, the CIA, British intelligence, bribery, secretly funded street demonstrations and (lest you think there’d be no torture in the film) the installation of an autocratic regime that went on to create a fearsome secret police that tortured opponents for decades after. All of this was done in the name of what used to be called “the Free World.” That “successful” coup was the point of origin for just about every disaster and bit of “blowback”—a term first used in the CIA’s secret history of the coup—in U.S.-Iranian relations to this day. Many of the documents have been released, and what a story it is!

Or here’s another superb candidate: the CIA’s Phoenix Program in Vietnam. If you’re into torture porn, this is the clandestine operation for you! Meant to wipe out the Viet Cong’s political infrastructure, it managed to knock off an estimated 20,000 Vietnamese, remarkably few of whom actually were classified as “senior NLF cadres.”

difficult relationship with China is often driven by heated electoral competition on the island. In this environment, Washington should avoid reacting to what is said and instead focus on what leaders in the region actually do.

Fourth, the American people deserve a vigorous debate over East Asia policy. The nomination of former Sen. Chuck Hagel as secretary of defense has focused on his views of Israel, but the press and Congress should force both him and Secretary of State-designate John Kerry to offer their perspectives on the “rebalancing” effort. The administration must also convince the public that resources should be devoted to East Asia during an era of skyrocketing budget deficits.

Washington’s commitment to the region must not go beyond the willingness of these countries to defend their own interests. The Japanese prime minister’s recent advocacy of greater defense spending is a hopeful sign. Similar commitments should be expected from South Korea and Taiwan. Regional integration is vital. The Obama administration should continue to foster military cooperation among Asian nations and must also advocate more vigorously for the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a free trade agreement consisting primarily of democratic countries.

Finally, we should not assume that the nations of East Asia are on an unstoppable rise to global dominance or that the United States is in inexorable decline. For example, China’s one child policy has limited population growth at the price of a rapidly aging population. This means that more resources must be devoted to pensions and health care, and that wages will rise due to a smaller workforce. Japan, Taiwan and South Korea face even

By **STEVEN PHILLIPS**
The Baltimore Sun

Steven Phillips is a professor in the History Department at Towson University.



more serious demographic dilemmas. Such developments could limit the economic success that made these countries major global players. None of these countries attracts immigrants as the United States does.

President Barack Obama is becoming the elder statesman of the region, as new leaders have recently come to power in China, South

Korea, North Korea and Japan. He should take advantage of his status to shape a strategy that promotes democratic values, bolsters allies and avoids over-reacting to heated nationalist rhetoric. He should also explain to the press, the public and Congress why East Asia is vital to America’s security and economic health, and why America can remain an important player in the region for the foreseeable future.

By **TOM ENGELHARDT**
Los Angeles Times

Tom Engelhardt, co-founder of the American Empire Project and author of The End of Victory Culture, runs the Nation Institute’s TomDispatch.com.



tions, in part in an “Afghan” prison called “the Salt Pit” (run by the CIA), he was left at the side of a road in Albania. In between, his life was a catalog of horrors, torture and abuse.






Finally, who doesn’t like the idea of a torture biopic? The perfect subject’s out there, and he was just profiled on the front page of the New York Times. Former CIA agent John Kiriakou led the team that captured al-Qaida’s logistics specialist Abu Zubaydah, and he is the only CIA agent in any way associated with the agency’s torture activities likely to go to jail. And here’s the sort of twist that any moviemaker should love: He never tortured anyone. Not only that, but he spoke out publicly against torture. His crime? He leaked information, including the name of an undercover agent, to journalists. Russell Crowe would be perfect in the role.

Adventure, blood, torture, injustice, irony—what more could you ask for?

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

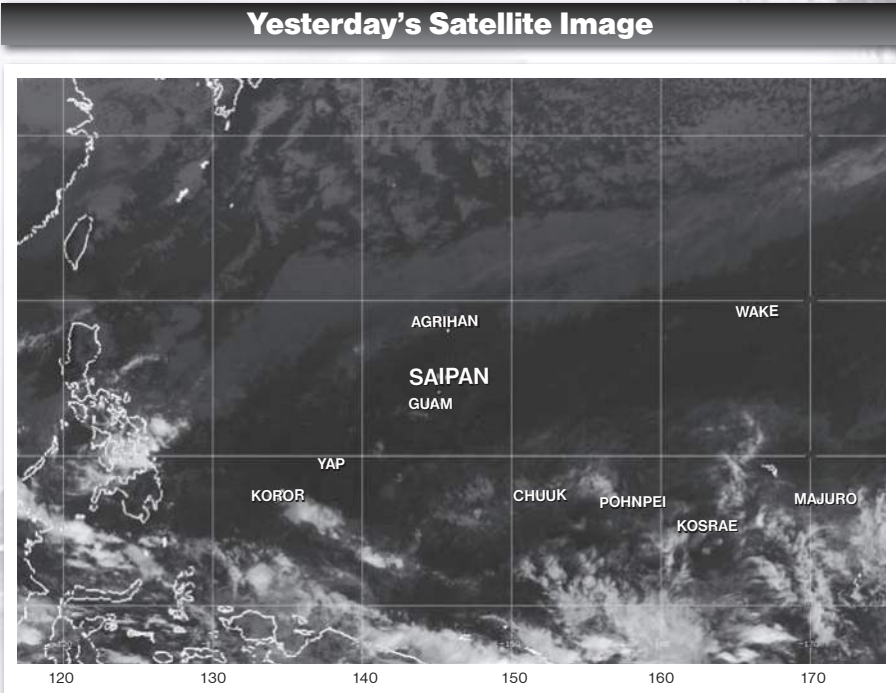
5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.
▲ 85° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°

Micronesia		
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲ 84 ▼ 77
Palau	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 83 ▼ 76
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲ 87 ▼ 77
Chuuk	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 80
Pohnpei	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 80
Kosrae	Showers	▲ 85 ▼ 80
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 86 ▼ 80

Around The Globe		
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲ 68 ▼ 63
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	▲ 36 ▼ 15
Hong Kong	Sunny	▲ 62 ▼ 55
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲ 77 ▼ 67
London	Snow	▲ 34 ▼ 32
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲ 76 ▼ 47
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲ 81 ▼ 74
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲ 79 ▼ 76
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲ 85 ▼ 59
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲ 38 ▼ 26
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲ 42 ▼ 34
Paris	Snow	▲ 31 ▼ 24
Pusan	Sunny	▲ 42 ▼ 25
Rome	Showers	▲ 46 ▼ 34
Salem	Partly Cloudy	▲ 51 ▼ 33
San Francisco	Sunny	▲ 64 ▼ 45
Seoul	Sunny	▲ 28 ▼ 13
Tokyo	Sunny	▲ 42 ▼ 29
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 45 ▼ 32

Tides				
Saipan Harbor				
5:26 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet	
11:53 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet	
6:38 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.6 Feet	
11:59 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet	



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2013
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from northeast of Wake Island at 25N170E to 20N155E then continues west-southwestward across the northern CNMI as a shear line to beyond 130E at 12N. Scattered showers are found along and up to 400 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough stretches east-southeastward from 4N130E to EQ163E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are present south of Koror south of a line from 4N132E to 2N140E and south of Pohnpei south of a line from 1N153E to 2N164E. Scattered showers are also occurring just southeast of Koror within 70 miles of a line from 7N135E to 3N143E. A trade-wind disturbance is generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms southeast of Majuro between 1N and 8N from 172E to the date line.

Sunrise/Sunset			Moonrise/Moonset		
Today	6:47 AM	6:07 PM	Today	10:36 AM	11:12 PM
Friday	6:47 AM	6:08 PM	Friday	11:16 AM	
Saturday	6:47 AM	6:08 PM	Saturday	11:57 AM	12:02 AM
Sunday	6:47 AM	6:09 PM	Sunday	12:39 PM	12:52 AM
Monday	6:47 AM	6:10 PM	Monday	1:23 PM	1:42 AM

Note: Blank spaces indicate that a rising or a setting did not occur during that 24-hour interval.

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A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMUT SARI
Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

■ **CAMPUS BULLETIN**
Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JAN. 7, 2013									
DEPARTURES					ARRIVALS				
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)					GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN				
UA5070	4:35am	5:25am	2, 4, 6, 7		UA 5069	2:45am	3:35am	2, 4, 6, 7	
UA5062	4:40am	5:30am	1, 3, 5		UA5071	7:05am	7:55am	Daily	
UA5068	8:25am	9:15am	Daily		UA5073	9:50am	10:40am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7	
UA5074	11:10am	12:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7		UA5075	1:45pm	2:35pm	1, 4, 5, 7	
UA5076	3:10pm	4:00pm	Daily		UA5077	5:35pm	6:25pm	Daily	
UA5078	6:55pm	7:45pm	Daily		UA5079	8:20pm	9:10pm	Daily	
UA5072	9:45pm	10:35pm	Daily						
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)					NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN				
DL287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily		DL298	10:25am	3:00pm	Daily	
DL285	6:35am	9:15am	1, 3, 5, 7		DL286	7:40pm	12:15am+1	2, 4, 6, 7	
DL297	4:25pm	7:20pm	Daily		DL288	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily	
SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX)					OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN				
OZ119	4:00am	6:40am	Daily		OZ120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	Daily	
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)					BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN				
OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 6, 7		OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 5, 6	
OZ608	3:30am	6:40am	3		OZ607	9:35pm	2:25am+1	2	
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)					SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN				
OZ606	2:10am	6:00am	1		OZ603	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily	
OZ606	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7		OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via KIX	
OZ119	4:00am	11:20am	Daily via KIX		OZ605	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7	
OZ604	3:20pm	7:10pm	Daily		OZ605	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)					SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN				
3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7		3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7	
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)					BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN				
MU7108	3:50am	7:00am	1, 5		MU7107	7:40pm	2:55am+1	4, 7	
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)					GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN				
3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6		3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5	
SAIPAN-VLADIVOSTOK (VVO)					VLADIVOSTOK (VVO)-SAIPAN				
XF1734	6:30am	12:30pm	5		XF1733	8:00pm	12:05am+1	4	
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)					MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN				
OZ606/701	2:10am	11:15am	1		OZ704/603	12:10am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN	
OZ606/701	2:40am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7		DL172/288	8:05am	1:15am+1	Daily via NRT	
UA5070/191	4:35am	10:00am	6 via GUM		UA190/5077	10:55am	6:25pm	3, 6 via GUM	
UA5070/191	4:40am	10:00am	3		UA190/5079	10:55am	9:10pm	3, 6 via GUM	
DL287/173	6:00am	10:25pm	Daily via NRT		OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN	
UA5076/183	3:10pm	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM		OZ702/605	12:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN	
UA5076/183	3:10pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM		PR110/UA5071	10:10pm	8:00am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM	
OZ604/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN		UA184/5071	10:55pm	7:55am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	
UA5072/PR111	9:55pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM		UA184/5071	11:59pm	7:55am+1	2, 5 via GUM	
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)					HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN				
OZ606/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN		OZ746/603	12:30am	2:20pm	Daily via ICN	
OZ606/721	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN		OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN	
UA5076/147	3:10pm	10:30pm	1, 5 via GUM		OZ722/605	1:15pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN	
OZ604/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	Daily via ICN		UA180/5071	11:25pm	10:40am+1	1 via GUM	
					UA180/5077	11:25pm	6:25pm+1	5 via GUM	

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; VLK: Vladivostok Air.

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE									
Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency		
Guam-Rota				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily		
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily		
Rota-Saipan				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily		
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily		
Guam-Rota				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily		
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily		
Rota-Saipan									
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	Tinian-Saipan					
Saipan-Rota				FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily		
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily		
Rota-Guam				FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily		
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily		
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily		
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily		
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily		
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily		
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily		
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily		
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily		
				FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily		
				FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily		

Business

House approves \$50.5 billion in Sandy aid

WASHINGTON (AP)—More than 10 weeks after Superstorm Sandy brutalized parts of the heavily populated Northeast, the House approved \$50.5 billion in emergency relief for the victims Tuesday night as Republican leaders struggled to close out an episode that exposed painful party divisions inside Congress and out.

The vote was 241-180, and officials said the Senate was

likely to accept the measure early next week and send it to President Barack Obama for his signature. Democrats supported the aid in large numbers, while majority Republicans opposed it by a lopsided margin.

"We are not crying wolf here," said Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., one of a group of Northeastern lawmakers from both parties who sought House passage of legislation roughly in

line with what the Obama administration and governors of the affected states have sought.

Democrats were more politically pointed as they brushed back Southern conservatives who sought either to reduce the measure or offset part of its cost through spending cuts elsewhere in the budget.

"I just plead with my colleagues not to have a double standard," said Rep. Carolyn

Maloney of New York. "Not to vote tornado relief to Alabama, to Louisiana, to Mississippi, Missouri, to—with Ike, Gustav, Katrina, Rita—but when it comes to the Northeast, with the second worst storm in the history of our country, to delay, delay, delay."

One key vote came on an attempt by Rep. Rodney Freylinghuysen to add \$33.5 billion

to an original allotment of \$17 billion in aid. That roll call was 228-192 and Democrats broke 190-2 in favor, while Republicans opposed it overwhelmingly, 190-38.

Similarly, on final passage, 192 Democrats joined 49 Republicans in support. Opposed were 179 Republicans and one Democrat.

Earlier, conservatives failed in an attempt to offset a part of

the bill's cost with across-the-board federal budget cuts. The vote was 258-162.

Rep. Mark Mulvaney, R-S.C., arguing for the reduction, said he wasn't trying to torpedo the aid package, only to pay for it. "Are there no savings, are there no reductions we can put in place this year so these folks can get their money?" he asked plaintively.

Wal-Mart to hire vets, buy more American products

NEW YORK (AP)—Why wait on Washington when there's Wal-Mart?

Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the world's largest retailer and the biggest private employer in the U.S. with 1.4 million workers here, said Tuesday that it is rolling out a three-part plan to help jumpstart the sluggish U.S. economy.

The plan includes hiring more than 100,000 veterans in the next five years, spending \$50 billion to buy more American-made merchandise in the next 10 years and helping its part-time workers move into full-time positions.

The move comes as Wal-Mart tries to bolster its image amid widespread criticism. The company, which often is criticized for its low-paying jobs and buying habits in the U.S., recently has faced allegations that it made bribes in Mexi-

co and calls for better safety oversight after a deadly fire at a Bangladesh factory that supplies its clothes. Wal-Mart said its initiatives are unrelated to those events, but rather are meant to highlight that companies don't have to wait for lawmakers in Washington, D.C. to fix the economy.

"We've developed a national paralysis that's driven by all of us waiting for someone else to do something," Bill Simon, president and CEO of Wal-Mart's U.S. business, said Tuesday at an annual retail industry convention in New York. "The beauty of the private sector is that we don't have to win an election, convince Congress or pass a bill to do what we think is right. We can simply move forward, doing what we know is right."

Any changes that Wal-Mart makes to its hiring and buying

practices garner lots of attention because of the company's massive size. Indeed, with \$444 billion in annual revenue, if Wal-Mart were a country, it would rank among the largest economies in the world. But critics say the changes amount to a drop in the bucket for the behemoth, and they question whether Wal-Mart's initiatives will have a major impact on the U.S. economy.

"America's largest retailers play an important role in our nation's economy and in the well-being of millions of lives," said Stuart Appelbaum, president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union. "Retailers like Wal-Mart could provide the nation with a much needed economic boost by paying higher wages and providing stable scheduling—while still remaining profitable and continuing to offer low prices."



From left, Rep. Gregory W. Meeks, D-N.Y., Suffolk County, N.Y., Executive Steve Bellone, Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., Rep. Steve Israel, D-N.Y., and Nassau County Executive Edward P. Mangano, celebrate just after the House of Representatives passed a \$50.7 billion emergency aid bill for states hit by Superstorm Sandy, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2013, at the Capitol in Washington. The measure is expected to pass the Senate as well.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Boeing 787 jets in Japan grounded after problems

TOKYO (AP)—Japan's transport ministry says Boeing 787 planes are being grounded for safety checks in the latest blow for the new passenger jet. One of the 787s operated by All Nippon Airways made an emergency landing Wednesday in western Japan after a cockpit message showed battery problems—the latest in a series of problems including a battery fire and fuel leaks. No one has been seriously injured. The ministry said Wednesday it got notices from ANA, which operates 17 of the jets, and Japan Airlines which has seven, that all their 787 aircraft will not be flying. The grounding was being done voluntarily by the airlines. But the ministry says it's categorizing the problem Wednesday as a "serious incident" that could have led to an accident.

Facebook unveils social search feature

MENLO PARK, Calif. (AP)—Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg unveiled a new search feature that's designed to entice people to spend more time on his company's website and will put the world's largest online social network more squarely in competition with Google and other rivals such as Yelp and LinkedIn. Called "graph search," the new service unveiled Tuesday lets users quickly

sift through their social connections for information about people, interests, photos and places. It'll help users who, for instance, want to scroll through all the photos their friends have taken in Paris or search for the favorite TV shows of all their friends who happen to be doctors. Although Zuckerberg stressed that "graph search" is different from an all-purpose search engine, the expanded feature escalates an already fierce duel between Google Inc. and Facebook Inc. as they grapple for the attention of Web surfers and revenue from online advertisers.

Hot Wheels edition Camaro has toy-themed touches

DETROIT (AP)—The Hot Wheels edition of the Chevrolet Camaro at the Detroit auto show offers a little something for car lovers, kids and kids at heart. General Motors Co. last year announced it would sell the vehicle with Hot Wheels logos and other toy-inspired touches such as red-lined wheels. At the North American International Auto Show, the car sits on an oversized track that appears to swoop down from the ceiling. GM has said that the Hot Wheels edition would be offered as a coupe and convertible in a "Kinetic Blue" paint color. At the car's display in Detroit, visitors can take a digital photo with a Camaro in the background and share it online. There's also a track to jump toy Hot Wheels.

Ireland: Horsemeat found in supermarket burgers

LONDON (AP)—The Irish food safety watchdog said Tuesday that it had discovered traces of horse and pig DNA in burger products sold by some of the country's biggest supermarkets, including a burger sold by global retailer Tesco that authorities said was made of roughly 30 percent horse.

Ireland's Agriculture Minister Simon Coveney blamed a lone meat processor in County Monaghan, on the border with Northern Ireland, for the horsemeat find, which he called "totally unacceptable." Coveney told state broadcaster RTE that an imported additive used to make the burger appears to have been packed with horsemeat.

The additive was "either falsely labeled, or somebody made a mistake, or somebody was behaving recklessly. That

allowed some horsemeat product to come into the system that shouldn't have been here," he said, adding that veterinarians had been dispatched to the meat processor and other factories to conduct more tests.

"A mistake has been made here, it has been flagged by our systems as it should have been, and we will take the appropriate action to ensure it doesn't happen again," Coveney said.

U.K.-based Tesco PLC apologized for its horsemeat-heavy burger and said it was pulling Tesco-brand burgers from stores in Britain and Ireland as a precaution. The find is unwelcome news for the world's fourth-largest food retailer, known in the United States under its Fresh & Easy brand.

"The presence of illegal meat in our products is extremely

serious," the company said in a statement. "Our customers have the right to expect that food they buy is produced to the highest standards. ... We understand that many of our customers will be concerned by this news, and we apologize sincerely for any distress."

But the bad news wasn't just for Tesco.

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland also said Tuesday that it had found traces of pig DNA in 85 percent of the burger products it tested in Irish supermarkets, including those operated by British frozen food specialist Iceland, German discounters Lidl and Aldi, and supermarket giant Spar. Irish stores, including Dunnes—the country's largest domestically owned supermarket chain—also carried beef with horse or pig DNA.



LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
13,534.89	1,472.34	3,110.78
27.57	1.66	0.00
+0.20%	+0.11%	+0.00%

EXCHANGE RATES

Australian Dollar	0.9475	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7528
British Pound	0.6228	Indian Rupee	54.765
Canadian Dollar	0.9853	Indonesian Rupiah	9645
Chinese Yuan	6.2197	Japanese Yen	88.123
Euro	0.7526	Malaysian Ringgit	3.016
		New Zealand Dollar	1.1904
		Philippine Peso	40.65
		Singapore Dollar	1.255
		South Korean Won	1059.99
		Swiss Franc	0.9321
		Taiwan Dollar	28.971
		Thailand Baht	29.925

Nation

Obama proposing gun limits, faces tough obstacles

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama is launching the nation's most sweeping effort to curb gun violence in two decades, setting up a legislative fight with a deeply di-

vided Congress that even some of his staunchest allies expect to fall short of its goals.

The broad package Obama will announce Wednesday, just over a month after the horrific

Newtown, Conn., school shootings, is expected to include more than a dozen steps the president can take on his own through executive action. Those measures will provide a pathway for skirt-

ing opposing lawmakers, but they will be limited in scope, and in some cases, focused simply on enforcing existing laws. The proposals that require congressional approval will include a ban on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines along with a requirement for universal background checks on gun buyers. But some gun control advocates worry that opposition from Republicans and conservative Democrats, as well as the National Rifle Association, will be too great to overcome.

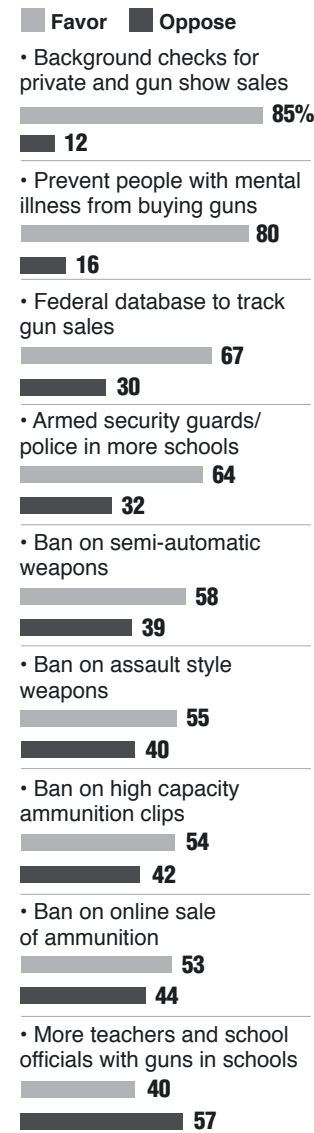
"We're not going to get an outright ban," Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y., said of limits on assault weapons. Still, McCarthy, a leading voice in Congress in favor of gun control, said she would keep pushing for a ban and hoped Obama would as well.

White House officials, seeking to avoid setting the president up for failure, have emphasized that no single measure—even an assault weapons ban—would solve a scourge of gun violence across the country. But without such a ban, or other sweeping Congress-approved measures, it's unclear whether executive actions alone can make any noticeable difference.

"It is a simple fact that there are limits to what can be done within existing law," White House spokesman Jay Carney said Tuesday. "Congress has to act on the kinds of measures we've already mentioned because the power to do that is reserved by Congress."

Opinion on gun control debate

There is public support for many gun policy proposals, according to a new Pew poll.



Source: Pew Research Center poll of 1,502 adults, Jan. 9-13, 2013; margin of error: +/- 2.9 percentage points
Graphic: Judy Treible © 2013 MCT

New York's Assembly on Tuesday easily passed the toughest gun control law in the nation and the first since the Connecticut school shootings. The statewide measure includes a tougher assault weapons ban and provisions to try to keep guns out of the hands of mentally ill people who make threats.

Obama will announce his proposals in a midday event at the White House, flanked by children who wrote to him about gun violence following the massacre of 20 students and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Obama has pledged urgent action to prevent future mass shootings, and his plan—coming just one month after the Newtown attacks—is swift by Washington standards. The president's framework is based on recommendations from Vice President Joe Biden, who led a wide-ranging task force on gun violence. Beyond the gun control measures, Biden also gave Obama suggestions for improving mental health care and addressing violent images in video games, movies and television.

The vice president's proposals included 19 steps that could be achieved through executive action.

Obama may order the Justice Department to crack down on people who lie on background checks; only a tiny number are now prosecuted. Such a step has support from the National Rifle Association, which has consistently argued that existing laws must be enforced before new ones are considered.



A convention attendee handles a Sig Sauer P220 .45 caliber semiautomatic pistol at the 35th annual SHOT Show, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2013, in Las Vegas.

Risk to all ages: 100 kids die of flu each year

NEW YORK (AP)—How bad is this flu season, exactly? Look to the children.

Twenty flu-related deaths have been reported in kids so far this winter, one of the worst tolls this early in the year since the government started keeping track in 2004.

But while such a tally is tragic, that does not mean this year will turn out to be unusually bad. Roughly 100 children die in an average flu season, and it's not yet clear the nation will reach that total.

The deaths this year have included a 6-year-old girl in Maine, a 15-year Michigan student who loved robotics, and 6-foot-4 Texas high school senior Max Schwolert, who grew sick in Wisconsin while visiting his grandparents for the holidays.

"He was kind of a gentle giant" whose death has had a huge

impact on his hometown of Flower Mound, said Phil Schwolert, the Texas boy's uncle.

Health officials only started tracking pediatric flu deaths nine years ago, after media reports called attention to children's deaths. That was in 2003-04 when the primary flu germ was the same dangerous flu bug as the one dominating this year. It also was an earlier than normal flu season.

The government ultimately received reports of 153 flu-related deaths in children, from 40 states, and most of them had occurred by the beginning of January. But the reporting was scattershot. So in October 2004, the government started requiring all states to report flu-related deaths in kids.

Other things changed, most notably a broad expansion of who should get flu shots. During the

terrible 2003-04 season, flu shots were only advised for children ages 6 months to 2 years.

That didn't help 4-year-old Amanda Kanowitz, who one day in late February 2004 came home from preschool with a cough and died less than three days later. Amanda was found dead in her bed that terrible Monday morning, by her mother.

"The worst day of our lives," said her father, Richard Kanowitz, a Manhattan attorney who went on to found a vaccine-promoting group called Families Fighting Flu.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention gradually expanded its flu shot guidance, and by 2008 all kids 6 months and older were urged to get the vaccine. As a result, the vaccination rate for kids grew from under 10 percent back then to around 40 percent today.

of Christina Eilman, who will require care for the rest of her life for severe brain injuries suffered in a 2006 fall from a 7th-floor window at a Chicago housing project where she had just been raped.

Laid-off Oregon man wins \$1 million in lottery

MERLIN, Ore. (AP)—Laid off since May, Riley Gunn was driving his wife and three kids to their one-room cabin when he stopped to buy corn dogs—a guilty pleasure they normally don't indulge. Gunn also

got some lottery tickets, even though money was tight and he knew his wife wouldn't approve. He felt sure he would win—and he did. His \$16 investment brought a \$1 million prize. Later, when the 34-year-old Gunn learned of his good fortune, he woke his wife, Misti, to make sure he wasn't imagining it. She jumped out of bed, saying, "You'd better not be kidding me," Riley Gunn said, standing in the Lil' Pantry Market & Deli, where he bought the winning ticket. "I said, 'Does that seem like something I would do?'"

Smallest state is big battleground on gay marriage

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)—Hundreds of supporters of same-sex marriage rights assembled at the Rhode Island Statehouse on Tuesday, urging lawmakers to make the nation's smallest state the 10th to allow gay and lesbian couples to wed—and the last to do so in New England.

House Speaker Gordon Fox, who is gay, has called for a vote on same-sex marriage legislation in his chamber by month's end, making Rhode Island the latest state to address an issue whose supporters see things swinging their way after voters in Maine, Maryland and Washington approved gay marriage last fall.

About 300 supporters and opponents signed up to address the legislative committee reviewing the bill—they were limited to 2 minutes each to keep the hearing from going all night—while hundreds more gathered in the hallways outside the hearing.

Downstairs, a raucous rally of gay-marriage opponents beneath the Statehouse rotun-

da at times drowned out those testifying in the third-floor committee room.

"I'd like us to get on the right side of history," said Josephine O'Connell, 71, of Providence, who said it "breaks her heart" that her home state is the only one in New England that doesn't allow gays and lesbians like her to marry. "I don't want to be looking back in 20 years, thinking 'what were we thinking?'"

Gov. Lincoln Chafee, an independent, and Treasurer Gina Raimondo, a Democrat, both spoke out in favor of gay marriage at the hearing.

"I'm here as your treasurer, but I'm really here as a mother and wife," said Raimondo. "Every Rhode Islander deserves the same rights that we have."

Hundreds of others showed up to urge lawmakers in this heavily Catholic state to drop the legislation and protect the current definition of marriage.

The Roman Catholic Church opposes the legislation on religious grounds—and more practical ones. The Rev. Ber-

nard Healey told lawmakers that the Providence Diocese is concerned Catholic schools and charitable organizations could be forced to change their employee benefit policies if compelled to recognize the same-sex spouses of employees.

"We are here to defend and support the longstanding definition of marriage... as the exclusive and lasting relationship of a man and a woman," Healey said. "Using the law to alter or redefine marriage is an injustice to those who have embraced this way of life."

Others warned that allowing gay marriage would erode social norms.

"Just because these states in New England have decided to redefine marriage doesn't mean we should follow them down this path," said Michael Krzywonos of Pawtucket. "The polygamists will be next in line. Then we'll begin to test the boundaries of what age is permissible. And then we will test whether love and marriage can only be between two people."

ACROSS THE NATION

Chicago closer to settling police suits for \$32M

CHICAGO (AP)—A Chicago City Council committee preliminarily approved settlements Tuesday in two police misconduct cases that would cost the city nearly \$33 million, including \$22.5 million for a California woman that apparently would be the largest payout to a single such plaintiff in the city's history. The full City Council is expected to sign off on the settlements Thursday. The bigger of the two would go to the family

Asia

Wildlife group wants Thailand to ban ivory trade

BANGKOK (AP)—An international conservation group on Tuesday urged Thailand to ban all ivory trading, warning that rising demand for tusks is fueling an unprecedented slaughter of elephants in Africa.

The World Wildlife Fund said “massive quantities” of African ivory are being imported illegally into Thailand, where they are carved into Buddhist statues, bangles and jewelry that are then sold to tourists or smuggled elsewhere. Although it is against the law to sell African tusks in Thailand, ivory from domesticated elephants can be traded legally.

“Many foreign tourists would be horrified to learn that ivory trinkets on display next to silks in Thai shops may come from elephants massacred in Africa,” said Elisabeth McLellan, manager of WWF’s Global Species Program. “It is illegal to bring ivory back home and it should no longer be on sale in Thailand.”

The U.N. Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, or CITES, banned all international ivory trade in 1989. But Thai traders and smugglers have thrived because the ban never addressed the domestic markets, and without DNA testing, it is difficult to tell where ivory originated.

Criminal networks have exploited that loophole to flood Thai shops with “blood ivory from Africa,” the World Wildlife Fund said.

“The only way to prevent Thailand from contributing to elephant poaching is to ban all ivory sales,” said Janpai Ongsiriwittaya, campaign leader for WWF in Thailand. “Today the biggest victims are African elephants, but Thailand’s elephants could be next.”

Africa is in the midst of a crisis that saw tens of thousands of elephants slaughtered last year alone. According to the World Wildlife Fund, the international trade in ivory has reached its “highest ever recorded rate.”

Poaching is up because of increasing demand from Asia—particularly from China. But poor African villagers also have much to gain; they can collect vast sums relative to their normal earning power for killing an elephant and taking its tusks.

On Tuesday, the group launched a global petition drive urging Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra to ban the trade to curb illegal killings on the African continent.

Thai authorities said Tuesday that the government did not plan to impose a ban at present, adding that Thailand has established some measures that could help tackle the problem.

“It is not doable to ban all ivory trading at the moment,” said Theerapat Prayurasiddhi, deputy director-general of the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation. “This is because in the case of domesticated elephants, it’s

within the owner’s rights to do what he wishes with the remains of an elephant after its death. Therefore, we cannot prohibit

them from selling the tusks.”

He said Thailand has tackled the illegal ivory trade through the registration of shops and

businesses and detailed records of sales.

“We are also urging traders not to sell ivory to foreign buy-

ers, who will likely bring it out of the country and therefore violate the CITES agreement,” Theerapat said.



In this Dec. 14, 2012 photo, ivory tusks and carvings are displayed at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation office in Albany, N.Y.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Chinese police arrest 7 over self-immolations

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese state media say police in northwestern China have arrested seven people accused of persuading a Tibetan villager to self-immolate. The official Xinhua News Agency says a police investigation found that the self-immolation by a 26-year-old in Gansu province’s Hezuo city was “masterminded by key members of the ‘Tibetan Youth Congress’ of the overseas Dalai clique.” The Tibetan Youth Congress was unavailable for comment late Tuesday evening. It is based in India and advocates independence for Tibet. Dozens of ethnic Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009 to protest Beijing’s rule over the Himalayan region.

US plays down Afghan threat to Central Asia

ASHGABAT, Turkmenistan (AP)—A senior U.S. diplomat has played down concerns among Central Asian governments that the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan could foment regional instability. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake said Tuesday during a visit to Turkmenistan that the United States will conduct a responsible pullback that ensures security gains made in recent years. He says U.S. security forces will focus after 2014 on training Afghan troops and continuing the counterterrorism mission.

Blake commended governments in the region for their role in helping rebuild the Afghan economy. He singled out Turkmenistan for praise for supplying electricity to Afghanistan, with which it shares a 750-kilometer (465-mile) frontier.

Vietnam sentences democracy activist to 3 years

HANOI, Vietnam (AP)—A Vietnamese court has sentenced a democracy activist to three years in prison in an ongoing government crackdown on dissent. The state-controlled Laborer newspaper said Vo Viet Dzien was convicted Tuesday in southern Tay Ninh province of carrying out “activities aimed at overthrowing the people’s administration.” The 41-year-old was found guilty of working with Phuc Hung Vietnam, a relatively unknown dissident group the paper said was based in the United States. The newspaper said Dzien was arrested in April 2012 when he entered Vietnam from Cambodia after attending two training courses organized by that group.

Documents say India rape suspect is a juvenile

NEW DELHI (AP)—Documents presented in a hearing Tuesday indicate that a suspect in the fatal gang rape of a young woman on a New Delhi bus in December was a juvenile at the time of the attack, a court official present at the hearing said.

Two principals from the suspect’s elementary school showed paperwork indicating that the suspect was a juvenile at the time of the attack, which would make him ineligible for the death penalty, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of a gag order on the case.

A judge is expected to rule on the suspect’s age in a Jan. 28

hearing, the official said, adding that the suspect did not appear in court Tuesday.

The suspect, who is not being identified by The Associated Press because he says he is 17, would face three years in a reform facility if convicted as a juvenile. A conviction as an adult could lead to his execution.

Five other men also have been charged in the case, which has put an international spotlight on sexual abuse against women in India. One of the five now says he is also a minor.

Police say the 23-year-old victim and a male friend boarded the bus on Dec. 16 after see-

ing an evening movie. But the bus turned out to be off-duty and was being driven by a group of friends who, police say, attacked the couple and then took turns raping the woman. They also penetrated her repeatedly with a metal bar, causing massive internal injuries. The two were eventually dumped on the roadside. The woman died two weeks later in a Singapore hospital.

Figuring out the young suspect’s age could be complicated. He is believed to lack a birth certificate—a common occurrence in India, where many people are born at home. In such cases, school records are often

used as proof of age or identity.

The principal of the suspect’s former elementary school, who testified at the hearing, said earlier that the suspect quit school in the third grade, about eight years ago. He declined to provide details on the school’s records on the young man, but said few people from the school, in a rural, poverty-battered part of Uttar Pradesh state, have proof of their age.

“None of these people have documents,” said Shishu Pal Singh. “If the parents say he’s 6 years old (when he is first brought to school), we list him as 6 years old. If he looks older, we may say he is 7.”

Afghan defense minister hopes US stays after 2014

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Afghanistan’s defense minister expressed optimism on Tuesday that the United States will not abandon his country after foreign combat troops leave at the end of 2014.

Bismullah Khan Mohammadi said he does not believe America will repeat the mistake it made after the 1989 Soviet pullout from Afghanistan and “forget” his country.

Many Afghans felt abandoned by the U.S. after 1989.

U.S. support to mujahedeen fighters who had battled the Soviets dried up a few years later and Afghanistan then sank into civil war. That was followed by the rise of the Taliban and the Sept. 11 attacks by al-Qaida, which was using Afghanistan as a sanctuary.

“I believe that they will not leave Afghanistan alone, they will help Afghanistan in different areas. I am optimistic that U.S. will support us and help us, especially with our security,”

Mohammadi said.

Mohammadi, who accompanied Afghan President Hamid Karzai on a visit to Washington last week, said does not think the U.S. wants Afghanistan to once again become an al-Qaida safe haven. “Because they also believe that if Afghanistan once again becomes a safe haven for the terrorists they will not be safe. So I don’t think they will repeat the same mistake as they did in the 1980s in Afghanistan, in which they forgot Afghani-

stan and that was the main reason which Afghanistan turned into the safe haven for the international terrorists,” Mohammadi told reporters.

Although the United States and its allies have committed themselves to fund the Afghan economy and security forces for a few years after 2014, a military presence hinges on a bilateral security agreement that includes the contentious issue of immunity from Afghan law for American troops.

World

French triple troops in Mali, prepare for assault

BAMAKO, Mali (AP)—After a punishing bombing campaign failed to halt the advance of al-Qaida-linked fighters, France pledged Tuesday to triple the size of its force in Mali, sending in hundreds more troops as it prepared for a land assault to dislodge the militants occupying the northern half of the country.

The move reversed France's earlier insistence on providing only aerial and logistical support for a military intervention led by African ground troops.

France plunged headfirst into the conflict in its former colony last week, bombarding the insurgents' training camps, arms depots and safe houses in an effort to shatter the Islamist domination of a region many fear could become a launching pad for terrorist attacks on the West and a magnet for extremists from around the world.

Despite five days of airstrikes the rebels have extended their reach, taking over a strategically important military camp in the central Malian town of Diabaly on Monday.

On Tuesday, France announced it was increasing the number of troops from 800 to 2,500. The offensive was to have been led by thousands of African troops pledged by Mali's neighbors, but they have yet to arrive, making it increasingly apparent that France will be leading the attack rather than playing a supporting role.

French President Francois Hollande told RFI radio early Tuesday that he believed France could succeed in ousting the extremists in a week. By afternoon he had outlined a far longer-term commitment. "We have one objective: To make sure that when we leave, when we end this intervention, there is security in Mali, legitimate leaders, an electoral process and the terrorists no longer threaten its territory," he said during a stop in the United Arab Emirates.

"We are confident about the speed with which we will be able to stop the aggressors," he added.

Israel's Labor head poised to be Netanyahu gadfly

JERUSALEM (AP)—Just seven years after quitting her job as a high-profile media commentator, the leader of Israel's Labor Party appears to be on track to become head of the country's second-largest parliamentary faction and the leading voice against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

And if Netanyahu's coalition somehow falls short of a majority in next week's election, Shelly Yachimovich would likely wind up with a far more important job: prime minister of Israel.

Yachimovich, 52, took over Labor, the once-storied movement that led Israel to independence, in late 2011 at one of its lowest points. Buoyed by a social protest movement, she revitalized the party by veering away from its traditional dovish platform of promoting peace with the Arabs and focusing almost entirely on the economy, jobs and the country's various social ills.

Her political ascent, along with the strength of the Israeli right wing, un-

Troubled Mali

France has begun assisting Mali's military in the battle to halt Islamist rebels linked to al-Qaida.

Violence escalates

- **March 22, 2012** Military officers seize power to protest government's failure to deal with Tuareg rebellion
- **April** Rebels take control of northern Mali; declare independence
- **May 26** Rebels and Islamist militant group, Ansar Dine, agree to merge and create an independent state in north; pact falls apart days later
- **June-July** Ansar Dine and its al-Qaida ally claim control over northern Mali; oust rebels; destroy Muslim shrines that offend their puritan views
- **Jan. 4, 2013** Ansar Dine begins to push further south; suspends cease fire agreement with government
- **Jan. 11** French president announces French military intervention
- **Jan. 14** Islamist rebels take control of Diabaly in government-controlled territory

Supplies for the French forces arrived in a steady stream Tuesday, part of the enormous logistics operation needed to support thousands of troops in the baking Sahara sun, a terrain the Islamists have operated in for nearly a decade. Transport planes bringing military hardware landed in quick succession on the short airstrip: A giant Antonov, two C-17 Boeings and a C-160 disgorged equipment in preparation for a land offensive to try to seize back the northern territory held since April by a trio of rebel groups affiliated with al-Qaida.

Burly French troops in fatigues carried boxes of munitions as armored personnel carriers lined up at the airport's gasoline pump. Roughly 40 armored vehicles were driven in overnight by French soldiers stationed in Ivory Coast. They include the ERC-90,

a six-wheeled vehicle mounted with a 90mm cannon. Dozens of French Marines camped out on the cement floor of an airport hangar.

Although at least 13 countries have offered support to the Mali mission, only France so far has boots on the ground. On Tuesday, U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta reiterated the Obama administration's position, saying no American troops will be sent. The U.S. is helping with communications and intelligence-gathering, and may allow American aircraft to help with transport.

A convoy of French armored cars was spotted late Tuesday heading toward Diabaly, the strategic town seized by the Islamists a day earlier, said a resident of the nearby town of Segou, who declined to be named out of fears for her safety.

goverment. As a result, she looks likely to become the country's new opposition leader, a forum that could allow the articulate populist to further burnish her credentials for any future race for prime minister.

Yachimovich appears set nearly to double Labor's presence from eight to as many as 18 seats in the 120-seat parliament. That would leave it well behind Likud-Beitenu but still the second-largest party in parliament.

Although Labor's roots were socialist, Yachimovich's economy-focused approach has alienated some of Labor's traditional supporters. Critics accuse her of turning Labor—which dominated Israeli politics for the country's first 30 years and produced prime ministers like David Ben-Gurion, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin—into a niche party that ignores Israel's diplomatic and security challenges and fails to present a viable alternative to the security-obsessed right.



Sacred city

• Known as the "City of 333 Saints," Timbuktu has a large number of mausoleums to Muslim spiritual guides

Country facts

Population 15.8 million
Major religions Muslim (90%), indigenous beliefs
Main exports Cotton, gold, livestock
 • Among the world's 25 poorest countries

© 2013 MCT

Source: ESRI, CIA World Factbook, Reuters

Iran: Khamenei's ban on nuclear weapons binding

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran sought Tuesday to spell out in its clearest terms yet that it is not seeking nuclear weapons, highlighting a religious decree issued by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that bans nuclear weapons.

The latest reference to Khamenei's declaration is seen as a bid to close the door on debates that Iran may have carried out atomic bomb trigger tests as inspectors from the U.N. atomic watchdog were on their way to Tehran for a new round of discussions.

Iran authorities have often cited Khamenei's religious edict, made more than seven years ago, in attempts to counter Western suspicion that Iran could be moving toward nuclear arms. But Iranian leaders now appear increasingly desperate to reopen talks with world powers as a possible way to ease sanctions.

Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast touched on a cultural rift between the Islamic Republic and the West, saying the United States and its allies don't understand the significance of the edict.

"There is nothing higher than the exalted supreme leader's fatwa to define the framework for our activities in the nuclear field," he told a press conference.

Mehmanparast could not be more definitive in dispelling suspicions that Iran may ultimately develop a nuclear weapon.

"We are the first country to call for a Middle East free of nuclear weapons," he said. When the highest jurist and authority in the country's leadership issues a fatwa, this will be binding for all of us to follow. So, this fatwa will be our top agenda."

Mehmanparast said Westerners "don't have an accurate understanding of Islamic beliefs and fatwas issued by great scholars," suggesting that the U.S. and its allies must take Khamenei's edict seriously.

To highlight its seriousness, he said Iran is willing to "register the fatwa as an international document."

Although Iran views Khamenei's 2005 fatwa as a binding declaration, the West and its allies have repeatedly accused Iran of using any tactic to prolong the standoff and possibly advance its nuclear capabilities.

The perception gap also strikes at the role of the supreme leader himself. The most ardent followers consider the post as divinely imbued and answerable only to God. For Iran's opponents, Khamenei is often seen as guiding a ruling system seeking to outwit the West and threaten Israel.

Dozens killed in blasts at Syria university

BEIRUT (AP)—Twin blasts ripped through a university campus in Syria's largest city on Tuesday as students were taking exams, setting cars alight, blowing the walls off dormitory rooms and killing more than 80 people, according to anti-regime activists and a government official.

The opposition and the government blamed each other for the explosions inside Aleppo University, which marked a major escalation in the struggle for control of the hotly contested commercial hub.

Activists said forces loyal to President Bashar Assad launched two airstrikes on the area, while Syrian state media said a "terrorist group"—the government's shorthand for rebels—hit it with two rockets.

Either way, the explosions shattered the relative calm of the sprawling, tree-lined campus, signaling the creep of Syria's civil war into areas that were previously spared the violence that has killed more than 60,000 people and reduced entire neighborhoods to rubble.

The competing narratives about what caused the blasts highlighted the difficulty of confirming reports from inside Syria.

The Syrian government bars most media from working in the country, making independent confirmation of events difficult. Both anti-regime activists and the Syrian government sift the information they give to journalists to boost their cause. And civilians stuck in

the middle avoid talking to the media, fearing reprisals from both sides for speaking their minds.

Aleppo has been the focus of a violent struggle for control since rebel forces, mostly from rural areas north of the city, pushed in and began clashing with government troops last summer.

The university is in the city's northwest, a sector still controlled by the government. Both activists and the Assad regime said those killed in Tuesday's blasts were mostly students taking their mid-year exams and civilians who sought refuge in the university dorms after fleeing violence elsewhere.

The blasts caused widespread destruction, scattering rubble and more than a dozen flaming cars across a wide street near a dormitory, according to videos shot on site. The dormitory's windows were blown out and some of its walls were gone, revealing beds and other furniture inside. Students and rescue workers combed the rubble, carrying away the wounded.

Images circulated by activists showed dead bodies lying in the street. The photos and videos appeared to be genuine and corresponded to other Associated Press reporting.

Activists said a government warplane carried out two airstrikes on the university. To support their claim, they circulated a video they said showed a small trail of smoke left by a jet. They could not explain why the government would strike an area controlled by its forces.

Focus

BADRASHEEN, Egypt (AP)—Packed in a rickety train speeding through the night, the poorly fed, pale-looking Egyptian conscripts were coming from some of Egypt's most dirt-poor villages to serve in one of the most miserable, lowly jobs of the security forces—as grunts in an anti-riot force usually deployed against protesters.

At a station just outside of Cairo before dawn Tuesday, the train's last car jumped the track, slammed into a parked train, and then was dragged for several kilometers. The car was torn to pieces, young recruits were sent flying along the tracks, and others were mangled.

In the end, 19 recruits mostly in their early 20s were killed and more than 100 were injured, some with arms or legs torn off.

The accident was the latest example of Egypt's decrepit infrastructure turning lethal for the country's poorest—and a reminder that the revolution two years ago has brought no relief in the lives of a population where poverty is worsening. The crash brought a new wave of anger at Islamist President Mohammed Morsi for failing to carry out reforms or overhaul the country's crumbling public services.

Morsi's supporters say such criticism is unfair, that he can't immediately fix the result of years of neglect and poor administration from ousted autocrat Hosni Mubarak's 29-year rule. The Mubarak era saw a string of train fires, crashes and a ferry sinking, some killing hundreds at a time.

Still, the anger was brewing Tuesday. After daybreak, a military helicopter hovering over the wreckage of the train enraged bystanders gathered at the site near Badrasheen station, 12 miles (20 kilometers) south of Cairo.

"Where were you when the accident happened?" men shouted, waving at the helicopter. Nearby, blood-stained train seats were scattered along the track, along with shoes and clothes, along with the shredded shell of the train car.

Hundreds of protesters massed in Cairo's main train station, chanting, "The people want to topple the regime," the main slogan of the uprising that ousted Mubarak in February 2011. They were joined by passengers whose trips were cancelled because most trains in the country were halted after the accident. Other protests with anti-Morsi slogans took place at the train stations in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria and the industrial Nile Delta city of Mahallah el-Kubra.

The crash came just ahead of the two-year anniversary of the Jan. 25 start of the anti-Mubarak uprising. The anniversary is expected to bring rallies by opponents of Morsi.

Since he came to power in June as Egypt's first elected president, Morsi has faced mounting economic, social and security woes. During his presidential campaign, Morsi promised a 100-day plan to resolve Egypt's most pressing issues like providing bread, cleaning up garbage and instilling security, but failed to deliver on most.

Only two months ago, 50 children died when a train rammed into their school bus in southern Egypt. Like



Egyptians inspect the wreckage of a train accident in Badrasheen, 40 KM south of Cairo, Egypt, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2013. At least 19 people died and more than 100 were injured when two railroad passenger cars derailed just south of Cairo, health officials say. The accident comes less than two weeks after a new transportation minister was appointed to overhaul the rail system, and just two months after a deadly collision between a train and school bus.

From misery to tragedy in Egyptian train crash

Tuesday, that tragedy sparked a storm of criticism of Morsi's administration.

Accompanied by TV cameras, Morsi visited a number of survivors from Tuesday's crash and pledged to hold officials accountable.

"My heart is bleeding for Egypt's martyrs and the injured and God willing, this accident will be the last to sadden Egypt and Egyptians," Morsi said at a military hospital in suburban Cairo.

The head of the Brotherhood's political party, Saad el-Katatni, said the accident was "evidence of the near complete collapse of the infrastructure after years of corruption under the rule of the ousted president."

The entire train journey illustrated the harshness and neglect Egypt's poor face. The draftees were packed into a decrepit, rusting train, heading to a join a force where abuse and mistreatment of recruits is notorious. After the accident, survivors were taken to a broken-down hospital with open sewers and decaying wards where the injured were loaded several to a bed.

The train was carrying 1,300 young recruits of the Central Security Forces, a 300,000-member body which draws from the ranks of military draftees for manpower to back up regular police forces in keeping internal law and order.

All young Egyptian men are required to perform military service, but

some of the poorest and least educated are diverted into the CSF. There, they are often deployed in crackdowns on protesters and strikers—black-garbed troops ordered to line up in human walls, armed with sticks to keep back demonstrators.

The miserable conditions in the force are so well known among Egyptians that at times even protesters showed sympathy for the conscripts during the anti-Mubarak uprising.

Those on Tuesday's train ride were heading from impoverished villages in the south to a training facility still

named "Mubarak Camp" on the outskirts of the capital.

Survivors described an awful 6-hour trip—even before the crash. They were crammed into the cars, sitting on the ground, squeezing multiple numbers into seats designed for two, even sitting on the baggage racks overhead. The rusting, aging cars had no electricity and were in complete darkness. Officers shouted insults and beat recruits, they said.

During the ride, "I cried hard, I thought I was going to die," said el-Imam el-Araby, a 20-year-old conscript from the southern province of Sohag as he lied on a metal bed in a foul-smelling ward of Hawamdiya hospital, close to the crash site, where 99 of the injured were taken.

Officials were still investigating the cause of the crash. Survivors said the train made unusual noises during the trip and the driver stopped several times to check the cars but was ordered to continue. As it neared Badrasheen, the rear car began to shake violently.

"Our car was jumping up and down and then suddenly there was something like a bomb," said Hamad Mahfouz, a 20-year-old from the southern province of Assiut who was injured in his legs. "In one minute, we fell down and found ourselves on the track itself. It was like an earthquake."

His twin brother was killed.

"When I gained my consciousness, I started calling my brother's name," he sobbed. "This is negligence. They knew that the train was broken. Why didn't they get us buses instead of killing us? They treat us like animals."

Many of the wounded and dead were taken to the hospital in pickup trucks by local residents. "It took hours for the hospital to open its morgue. The cold bodies were filling the floor," said Ahmed Abdel-Basit, who helped in the rescue.

Akmal Abdel-Fatah, a merchant who also helped the injured, said, "We thought the poor will harvest the fruits of the revolution but it turned against them. The poor are forgotten while the officials only serve their own interest."

CSF conscripts have rebelled against inhumane conditions several times in the past decades. Most notably, in 1986 they rioted for four days over rumors their term would be extended, setting hotels and nightclubs near the Pyramids on fire.

Train wrecks and other transportation disasters are common in Egypt because of outdated infrastructure, faulty maintenance and corruption. The railway's worst disaster was in 2002, when a train heading to southern Egypt caught fire, killing 363 people.

On Tuesday, Egypt's main opposition group, the National Salvation Front, quickly turned blame on Morsi, listing six train accidents since he came to power.

"It is not possible anymore to suffice with promises," it said in a statement. Morsi and his government "must rearrange its priorities" and focus on protecting Egyptians' lives and "improving their standards of living."



Environment

Volunteers search NC coast to rescue sea turtles

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP)—Slogging through muck and venturing out on kayaks, volunteers along North Carolina's seashore are rescuing sea turtles that become stunned when the water turns cold and get stuck in coastal sounds, unable to save themselves.

The sea turtles—typically green, Kemp's Ridley and the occasional loggerhead—tend to be juveniles who get so busy gorging themselves on the near-shore goodies that they don't get around to moving out to the warmer Gulf stream before a cold spell hits.

"This is really one of the absolute hot spots on the planet for cold stunning in almost any year," said Liz Browning Fox of Buxton on Hatteras Island, who rescues cold-stunned turtles that beach themselves or get stuck along the edge of the Pamlico Sound. "We have a huge sound system in North Carolina, and it's like a feasting table for several species ... Juvenile sea turtles feast on this delightful table. Like teenagers, they stay at the table as long as you'll let them."

Because they're cold-blooded, turtles' body temperatures match their environment. When the water temperature drops below 50 degrees, they become too lethargic to move into warmer water. Since the first cold-stunned turtle of the winter was found, Dec. 23, 2012, along Cape Lookout, rescuers have taken in 72 live turtles and found six others dead, said Matthew Godfrey, the state sea turtle biologist in Beaufort. The



In this Jan 2, 2013 photo provided by Liz Browning Fox, Lou Browning of Hatteras Island Wildlife Rehabilitation in N.C., holds a loggerhead turtle. AP

vast majority of the rescued turtles survived, he said.

Some years, as many as 150 cold-stunned turtles have been found in North Carolina, he said.

Most of the turtles this year are being found along Hatteras and Ocracoke islands, said Karen Clark, program coordinator at the Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education and an adviser to the Network for Endangered Sea Turtles on the

Outer Banks.

On Hatteras Island, one volunteer goes out each morning and checks the water temperature. When it's below 50 degrees, a core group of about 10 volunteers is alerted to search for cold-stunned turtles.

Fox dons knee boots while others wear hip waders that allow them to go into deeper water. Fox's brother, Lou Browning, brings turtles in on his kayak, sometimes cradling them on his lap. The volunteers carry these heavy turtles long distances to get them to a car.

A 25-pound turtle weighs a lot after a half-mile walk through muck, Fox said.

"When it comes to turtles, we bend over backward to do whatever we can whenever we can," Lou Browning said.

Turtles "are just simply amazing creatures," he said. "They've been around so many millions of years. They're the toughest animals on earth. They survive things that no other creature can."

Brittany Waterfield, 16, of Avon, who participated in a NEST training program rescued

a loggerhead with the help of her mother, Tammy, on a cold, dreary Sunday in January. "I felt like I had saved another life," Brittany said. "I would do anything for an animal."

People who find turtles should call NEST, which has a hotline that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. And never assume a sea turtle is dead, Fox says. Passers-by ignored one upside-down turtle, assuming it was dead, but rescuers saved it.

Hundreds of cold-stunned turtles have been found off the New England coast—so many

that rehabilitation facilities elsewhere are helping them recover.

Usually, when sea turtles are stunned and brought in for treatment, they haven't eaten for days or weeks. One loggerhead brought to the South Carolina Aquarium this week from New England had not eaten in a month.

Some turtles rescued in North Carolina also are getting help there.

"One thing that happens when sea turtles are cold stunned, their bodies just shut down. You can't feed them immediately, you have to wait for them to get going again," said Kelly Thorvalson, the turtle rescue program manager for the aquarium where three loggerheads stunned earlier this month off North Carolina are being treated.

They are usually treated with shots of antibiotics and vitamins until they can eat small amounts of food. The antibiotics also help prevent other ailments such as pneumonia from setting in.

In the case of the North Carolina loggerheads brought to South Carolina, the recovery will take months. Depending on how quickly they recover, the turtles will likely be released off South Carolina in late spring.

Fox is keeping a wary eye on the weather forecast, fearful that another drop in temperatures will bring more cold-stunned turtles ashore. The forecast calls for highs in the 30s in about a week.

"We are very concerned," she said. "We hope all the turtles got the idea from the first temperature drop and headed out to Gulf stream. But there are some turtles swimming in the sound. We will all be looking."

In Celebration of His New Life

†Xarius Anthony Echon Aguon

Born on August 30, 2010 has been called to his eternal rest on Monday, January 14, 2013 at the age of 2 years.

Mass is offered 6pm nightly at San Antonio Parish.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 9:00am on Thursday, January 17, 2013 at San Antonio Parish followed by the interment service at the Tanapag Cemetery.

Your prayers and presence are greatly appreciated.

The Family

Five simple swaps for a healthier home

By **TERRI BENNETT**
MCT INFORMATION SERVICES



The start of a new year can certainly be overwhelming. Most of us have a long list of all we want to accomplish in the next 12 months. If having a healthier home and healthier family tops yours, there are many ways to Do Your Part and get started. Here are five simple swaps that'll have you living healthier and more environmentally conscious at the same time.

1. Make a Shower Curtain Switch

Polyvinyl chloride—or PVC—is a soft plastic used to make common household items such as vinyl shower curtains. The plasticizers in PVC are suspected of causing developmental delays,

liver damage, and respiratory problems. Your best bet is to replace your vinyl shower curtains with ones labeled PVC-Free, made with a safer plastic known as EVA, or use a cotton or polyester shower curtain as a liner.

2. Swap out the Soap

Triclosan is the main ingredient found in many antibacterial hand soaps, gels, and body washes. And, it is believed to interfere with thyroid function. It's also linked to the creation of "superbugs" that are resistant to antibiotics. So what's the smart alternative? Soap and water. Even the FDA says it "does not have evidence that triclosan in antibacterial soaps and body washes provides any benefit over washing with regular soap and water."

3. Replace Certain Pots and Pans

Not all cookware is created equal. Many coated, non-stick

pans can actually leach a chemical known as perfluorooctanoic acid or PFOA—especially if scratched. PFOA is linked to cancer and birth defects. Safer cookware choices include cast iron, ceramic, and stainless steel pots and pans.

4. Ditch Dirty Dry Cleaners

Conventional dry cleaners commonly use toxic chemicals to "clean" clothes. One of those chemicals is perchloroethylene or Perc, which is linked to everything from headaches to organ damage. Safer solutions include choosing items that don't require dry cleaning, switching to a green dry cleaner, or at least letting your traditionally cleaned clothes air out before you hang them in your closet.

5. Select Safer Cleaners

The scary thing about some

chemical based cleaners is that their ingredients are not even required to be on the label. And those ingredients are some of the main sources of air pollution right inside our own homes. Swap out those cleaners for non-toxic ones that are also dirt cheap. Baking soda is a powerful non-abrasive cleanser. White vinegar is an all-natural disinfectant and effective at killing viruses like the flu on most surfaces. And hydrogen peroxide works in place of chlorine bleach to kill bacteria like salmonella and mold.

These simple swaps will help you jumpstart your New Year's resolutions and Do Your Part for our planet, too.

Terri Bennett is a veteran TV meteorologist, eco-expert and author of "Do Your Part: A practical guide for everyday green living" available at DoYourPart.com. Send questions to terri@doyourpart.com

In Celebration of Her New Life

†Rita Aquiningoc Manglona

May 21, 1942 – January 10, 2013

Her memories will forever live in the hearts of her:

Children: †George A. and Keiko A. Manglona (George Jr., Allen, Wendy & Billy)
Luncinda M. and John D. Attao (Geraldyn/Kurt Elley [Triton],
Jonathan/Sugako [Mariana], & Lance)
Norman A. and Katherine D. Manglona (Norman Jr., Tavia & Storm)
Charlene M. Lizama (Ryan/Cassie (Dre), Joelene/Abraham, Ritalene,
Jonalene, Joseph Jr.)
Lisa M. and Congressman Francisco S. Delacruz (Divana & Ray Salas
[Raymana]), Dana, Damien, Deveney)
†Julian A. & Mihiana Pangelinan (Gino, Monica, Chelsie, Audrey, Rachel
& Demana) (Joden, Dreshia & Maxine)
Patrick A. and Marie Manglona (Seth & Aaron), (Erin) (Venus Atdoon [Rita
Nicole/Patrick David])
Lori M. and Joseph K. Mendiola (Frankie Manglona– Angel)
Debra A. and Associated Judge Perry B. Inos (Perry Gus [Gabriella], Dixie, Ana Maria)

Brothers, Sisters and In-Laws:

Maria S.N. Haun, Consolacion Aquiningoc, Rosa P. Aquiningoc, Magdalena M.
Hofschneider, Esperanza Manglona, Emiliana B. Manglona, Maria M. & Bart Devine,
Tito M. & Piding Sablan, Joaquin M. & Del C. Manglona, Thomas M. & Laura I.
Manglona, Lucas T. Manglona, Nancy T. Manglona, George T. Manglona, Glenn T.
Manglona & Paul T. Manglona.

In Her New Life, She Now Joins Her:

Husband: Vicente Muna Manglona
Parents: †Ignacio A. and †Manuela SN. Aquiningoc
Parents-in-Law: †Lucas Ayuyu & †Concepcion Muna Manglona
Children: †George Aquiningoc Manglona
†Julian Aquiningoc Manglona

Brothers, Sisters and In-Laws:

†Vicenta A. & †Luis Villagomez, †Juliana A. & †Tomas Cruz, †Mariano S.N.
Aquiningoc, †Jose S.N. Aquiningoc, †Apolonia A. & †Jose U. Diaz and †Pacifico
S.N. Aquiningoc, †Henry V. Hofschneider, †Jose M., Norman T. Manglona and
†Nicolas M. Manglona.

She will be greatly missed by:

Daniel E. Taitano, Noberto Ebuenga, Nancy Ebuenga, Alice Mangorning, Ramat Lila, Vicente (Boyat) Lorenzo & Digna Cando.

She will also be missed by numerous cousins, nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Rosary is being prayed nightly at San Jose Church, Tinian at 7:30 pm.

Funeral Services will be held on Friday, January 18, 2013

7:00 a.m.	Her remains will be escorted to the Manglona Residence Chapel
7:30 a.m.	Responso Services
8:00 a.m.	Holy Rosary
10:30 a.m.	Departure to San Jose Church
11:00 a.m.	Mass of Christian Burial
12NOON	Interment Services at Tinian Cemetery.

PLEASE JOIN US IN PRAYERS

Thank You – Si Yu’us Ma’ase

Children & Families of the Late †Vicente M. & †Rita A. Manglona



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Gangsters Squad

Friday		4:15	7:15	9:50
Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:15	9:50
Sunday	1:15	4:15	7:15	
Mon through Thurs		4:15	7:15	

Cast: Sean Penn, Ryan Gosling, Josh Brolin
Genre: Crime • Rated R

Synopsis

Sean Penn, Josh Brolin, and Ryan Gosling star in this Warner Bros. adaptation of the L.A. Times article on a squad of cops in 1940's Los Angeles whose job it was to stop East Coast mafiosos from setting up shop in their city. *Zombieland*'s Ruben Fleischer directs.



Les Misérables

Friday		4:20	7:50
Saturday	1:00	4:20	7:50
Sunday	1:00	4:20	7:50
Mon through Thurs		4:20	7:50

Cast: Hugh Jackman, Russell Crowe, Anne Hathaway
Genre: Musical • Rated PG 13

Synopsis

The King's Speech's Tom Hooper directs this adaptation of Cameron Mackintosh's successful musical version of Victor Hugo's classic novel. The drama surrounds a the obsessive quest of Inspector Javert (Russell Crowe) as he spends years in an effort to capture escaped convict Jean Valjean. Hugh Jackman stars in the Universal Pictures production.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★



Texas Chainsaw 3D

Friday		7:30	9:45
Saturday	1:30	7:30	9:45
Sunday	1:30	7:30	
Mon through Thurs		7:30	

Cast: Alexandra Daddario, Scott Eastwood
Genre: Horror • Rated R



Texas Chainsaw 2D

Friday		4:00
Saturday		4:00
Sunday		4:00
Mon through Thurs		4:00

Cast: Alexandra Daddario, Scott Eastwood
Genre: Horror • Rated R



Django Unchained

Friday		4:30	8:00
Saturday	1:05	4:30	8:00
Sunday	1:05	4:30	8:00
Mon through Thurs		4:30	8:00

Cast: Jamie Foxx, Leonardo DiCaprio, Christopher Waltz
Genre: Western • Rated R



Jack Reacher

Friday		4:10	7:10	10:00
Saturday	1:10	4:10	7:10	10:00
Sunday	1:10	4:10	7:10	
Mon through Thurs		4:10	7:10	

Cast: Tom Cruise, Rosamund Pike, Robert Duvall
Genre: Thriller • Rated PG 13



Monsters Inc. 3D

Friday		4:05	7:05	9:35
Saturday	1:20	4:05	7:05	9:35
Sunday	1:20	4:05	7:05	
Mon through Thurs		4:05	7:05	

Cast: John Goodman, Billy Crystal, Mary Gibbs
Genre: Animation, Family • Rated G



The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 3D

Friday		7:55
Saturday	12:55	7:55
Sunday	12:55	7:55
Mon through Thurs		7:55

Cast: Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage
Genre: Fantasy • Rated PG 13



The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey 2D

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Cast: Martin Freeman, Ian McKellen, Richard Armitage
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Life & Style

‘American Idol’ returns betting big on new judges

LOS ANGELES (AP)—“American Idol” is facing a \$36 million-plus question: Will that combined paycheck lavished on superstar judges Mariah Carey, Nicki Minaj and Keith Urban pay off in ratings?

The newcomers have their work cut out for them whether they earn it with colorful feuding—ladies, you know who we’re talking about—or by discovering a singer who can charm America.

The talent show, a TV ground-breaker when it debuted in 2002 despite a starless panel with Simon Cowell, Randy Jackson and Paula Abdul, needs every edge as its audience erodes and other contests emerge as challengers. “I think it’s actually a renewal (of ‘Idol’) every couple of years, and what you’re seeing now is this panel has reinvigorated the show,” said Mike Darnell, Fox president of alternative entertainment.

NBC’s “The Voice,” one of the newcomers, enjoyed immediate success with brand-name panelists Christina Aguilera, Blake Shelton, Cee Lo Green and Adam Levine. But famous faces don’t guarantee a return, as Cowell’s “The X Factor” most recently proved.

Britney Spears, whose lack-



In this Jan. 8, 2013 photo, from left, Mariah Carey, Keith Urban and Nicki Minaj from “American Idol” attend the Fox Winter TCA Tour at the Langham Huntington Hotel, in Pasadena, Calif.

luster performance failed to capitalize on buzz about her intriguing foray into live TV, split from the show last week. It was a \$15 million lesson for all interested parties.

But “American Idol,” returning Wednesday (8 p.m. EST) with host Ryan Seacrest, has to make noise as it hits relative old age for a TV series, with its ratings still hefty but on a steady downward spiral.

Last season, “Idol” lost its status as the most-watched TV program for the first time since 2003, eclipsed by NBC’s “Sunday Night Football,” and pegged its lowest-rated season since it debuted in summer 2002.

An open-wallet approach worked for “Idol” before, with

Jennifer Lopez validating her \$12 million paycheck by helping (with Steven Tyler) to boost the show’s ratings in 2011. That allowed Ellen DeGeneres’ short-lived and genially unimpressive judging stint that ended in 2010 to fade into memory.

The result: Carey is raking in close to \$18 million, Minaj is getting \$12 million and Urban’s take is a reported \$6 million for the season.

Add in mainstay Jackson’s share (in the reported single-digit millions) and that’s a platinum-plated group. But it’s potentially money well spent for a show that, en route to living up to its title of finding new pop stars, has to keep viewers firmly engaged.

Finding a breakout star like

Kelly Clarkson or Carrie Underwood or Jennifer Hudson is one way to do it, but the odds are long. So it’s up to the professionals to step in.

“It’s more of an entertainment show than anything else, and if judges can supply the entertainment that’s an ingredient for success,” said analyst Brad Adgate of Horizon Media. “With ‘X Factor’ that didn’t happen and the show didn’t get into the fabric of pop culture.”

Carey and Minaj already are demonstrating their potential. Their feud, whether real or fabricated, has produced such head-shaking, headline-making moments as Carey alleging that Minaj threatened to shoot her after a taping. The rapper responded with dismissive tweets.

Review: Arnold’s back in ‘The Last Stand’

By CHRISTY LEMIRE
AP MOVIE CRITIC

“The Last Stand” is the Arnold Schwarzenegger movie you didn’t even realize you wanted to see.

This is the action superstar’s first leading role in a decade, having left acting to serve as the governor of California and whatnot, and while it may not have occurred to you to miss him during that time, it’s still surprisingly good to see him on the big screen again.

He is not exactly pushing himself here. Korean director Kim Jee-woon’s American film-making debut turns out to be an extremely Schwarzeneggerish Schwarzenegger film, full of big, violent set pieces and broad comedy. He may look a little creaky (and facially freaky) these days, but Arnold proves he’s still game for the mayhem as he fires off rounds and tosses off one-liners, and the movie at least has the decency to acknowledge that it knows that you know that he’s old.

The script also feels a bit old—“The Last Stand” is es-



This film image released by Lionsgate shows Forest Whitaker, left, and Arnold Schwarzenegger in a scene from, “The Last Stand.”

entially an amped-up version of “Rio Bravo,” with some “Jackass”-style hijinks courtesy of Johnny Knoxville himself. But Kim keeps things moving briskly and the members of the strong supporting cast don’t seem to mind that they’re playing flimsy types. Everyone’s just here for a mindless good time. Schwarzenegger stars as Ray Owens, sheriff of the tiny Arizona border town of Sommerton Junction, the kind of place where everyone knows everyone and the locals sit around the diner

trading folksy jokes. That’s why the sheriff is immediately suspicious of some visitors sharing a booth over breakfast one morning—they clearly don’t belong there. Andrew Knauer’s script makes some passing mention of Owens’ past career as a highly decorated Los Angeles police narcotics detective, which is intended to explain why this mild-mannered guy with the thick accent is such a bad-ass.

Turns out these new folks (led by Peter Stormare) are there laying the groundwork for Mexi-

can drug kingpin Gabriel Cortez (Eduardo Noriega), who’s just escaped federal custody in Las Vegas in elaborate fashion. He’s headed straight for the border at Sommerton with a hostage in the passenger seat in a stolen, souped-up Corvette that can reach speeds of 250 mph. While FBI agent John Bannister (Forest Whitaker) and his crew try in vain to chase Cortez, the sheriff and his makeshift posse set up a barricade. And they wait. His team consists of the innocent newbie (Zach Gilford), the grumpy veteran (Luis Guzman), the pretty and capable female deputy (Jaimie Alexander), her screw-up ex-boyfriend who happens to be in the town’s lone jail cell (Rodrigo Santoro) and the wacko with an arsenal who gives his weapons pet names. That would be Knoxville.

The shootouts and showdowns are muscular, high-energy and consist of an insane amount of gunfire, although there are some bursts of squirm-inducing, creative carnage. Much of the hand-to-hand combat is shot and edited in a way to obscure what Schwarzenegger is actually doing while creating the illusion that he’s kicking all kinds of butt.

Not guilty pleas entered for Lohan on misdemeanors



In this Oct. 11, 2012 file photo, Lindsay Lohan attends the Mr. Pink Ginseng launch party at the Beverly Wilshire hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif.

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Lindsay Lohan pleaded not guilty Tuesday to three misdemeanor charges related to a car crash and was ordered to appear in court for a hearing later this month.

Her plea was entered by her attorney Shawn Holley, who declined to comment after the hearing. Lohan was not required to attend.

Superior Court Commissioner Jane Godfrey said the actress must appear at a Jan. 30 pretrial hearing.

Lohan is charged with lying to police, reckless driving and obstructing police from performing their duties.

Police suspect Lohan was driving her sports car when it slammed into a dump truck while she was on her way to the set of "Liz and Dick" in early

June. Lohan told police she wasn't behind the wheel.

Lohan was on probation for a 2011 necklace theft case at the time and could face up to 245 days in jail if a judge determines she violated her probation.

Godfrey also set a Feb. 27 trial date on the misdemeanor counts.

The accident was not the only problem encountered by Lohan while shooting "Liz and Dick," a film based on the love affair between Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton.

She also was arrested in New York after an alleged fight with a woman, but a criminal complaint hasn't been drawn up. The district attorney's office there said last week that an inquiry was ongoing.

A week after the car accident, paramedics were summoned to Lohan's hotel room when she was late getting to the set. Her publicist at the time attributed her absence to fatigue and dehydration.

The film was expected to be a comeback opportunity for Lohan, who spent the past several years struggling with criminal court cases. Her performance, however, was panned by critics and fans.

'X Factor' winner Stevens signs record deal

NASHVILLE (AP)—"The X Factor" champ Tate Stevens has signed a record deal.

A Tuesday news release says the Season 2 winner signed a deal with Syco Music/RCA Records Nashville and is already writing and recording his major-label debut.

The 37-year-old Stevens, of Belton, Mo., won "The X Factor" last month, earning the title by never finishing worse than second in voting on Simon Cowell's reality singing contest show.

The untitled new album will be released later this fall. Syco Music is Cowell's label.



AP

In this Dec. 20, 2012 publicity photo released by FOX, finalist, Tate Stevens, performs during "The X Factor" Finale, on FOX. Stevens, who won Season 2 of Simon Cowell's "The X-Factor," has signed a record deal with Syco Music/RCA Records Nashville, announced Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2013.

Grouchy grandma talks her way out of family events

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My grandmother is 75 years old and, unfortunately, very unpleasant to be around. She has made many hurtful remarks in the past, which have led some family members to shut her out of their lives.

I live in another state and don't see my grandmother very often. I call her once or twice a month. When I do, she's nothing but pleasant with me, but she's often angry and tearful about other members of the family.

She feels her children and grandchildren should respect her as the matriarch of the family and include her in all family get-togethers. (My family tells me they have stopped inviting her to many functions because she's such a troublemaker.)

I'm concerned about my grandmother and am beginning to think that my parents and siblings should overlook her unpleasant behavior and occasional snide remarks. At the very least they should include her in important family functions. I'd be interested in your opinion, so I can share it with my family.

TROUBLED IN MINNESOTA

DEAR TROUBLED: Your grandmother appears to be reaping what she has sown. Verbal abuse often leaves scars on those at whom it is aimed, and no one can be blamed for wanting distance from a person who is deliberately hurtful.

Respect is something that has to be earned. Your parents and siblings "respect" your grandmother from a distance because they have learned it's the only safe way to do so.

Does this mean she should automatically be excluded from all family get-togethers? No. However, before she's invited to an important event, she should give assurances that she'll watch her mouth and be on her best behavior. Or else.

If this seems heavy-handed, so be it. It's no crime to protect oneself from someone else's mean-spiritedness.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: Please allow me to share a dating technique with your readers that has saved me a lot of relationship headaches. I call it "the 90-day rule."

Whenever I start dating someone, I try to see them at least once a week for 90 days. That way, if there are any character flaws, I find out within the first 90 days.

Among the flaws I've discovered: drug dealing and addiction, alcoholism, driving without a valid license and with illegal license tags, and lying about their occupation.

The idea is to avoid sexual intimacy during those first 90 days to keep your head clear. If you are intimate too soon, you'll find yourself making excuses for your partner. This technique has never failed me—unless I made an exception.

May I suggest your readers try this 90-day rule? If they do, I promise they won't be disappointed because it takes TIME to get to know someone. Before you can love someone, you must learn who that person really is.

CLEARHEADED IN CLEARWATER, FLA.

DEAR CLEARHEADED: Your 90-day rule makes a lot of sense. I have heard from many readers who went too far too fast because they felt they had made an instant emotional connection. I warn them that physical attraction should not be confused with love because what they're really describing is infatuation.

■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■■■

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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Newtown shooting survivors record song for charity

NEW YORK (AP)—Children who survived last month's shooting rampage at Connecticut's Sandy Hook Elementary School have recorded a version of "Over the Rainbow" to raise money for charity.

Twenty-one children from Newtown, Conn., performed the song Tuesday with singer-songwriter Ingrid Michaelson on ABC's "Good Morning America." Most of them are current and former students of the school, where 20 first-graders and six staff members were killed.

They recorded "Over the Rainbow" on Monday at the Fairfield, Conn., home of Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth, two former members of the Talking Heads and Tom Tom Club rock bands. Copies went on sale Tuesday on Amazon and iTunes, with proceeds benefiting the United Way of Western Connecticut and the Newtown Youth Academy.

Kayla Verga, 10, said she was singing for a friend, 6-year-old Jessica Rekos, who was killed in the massacre.

"Singing the song makes me feel like she's with me and she's



AP

Children from Newtown, Conn. and Sandy Hook Elementary school perform "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" on ABC's "Good Morning America" on Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2013 in New York.

beside me, singing along with me," Kayla told "GMA."

Another girl, 10-year-old Sandy Hook student Jane Shearin, added, "I really want to be kind to the people who have lost their loved ones and help them to recover from their sorrow."

Gunman Adam Lanza went on a shooting spree with a semi-automatic rifle in the school on Dec. 14 after having killed his mother at their home in Newtown. He fatally shot himself as police arrived at the school. It's

still unclear what motivated the attack.

The Sandy Hook children have returned to classes in a neighboring town at a building renamed for their old school. Newtown officials and residents have begun discussing what to do with the school where the shootings occurred.

Some parents of children killed in the massacre spoke out on Monday, calling for a national dialogue to help prevent similar tragedies.

Winfrey: Armstrong interview will satisfy viewers

NEW YORK (AP)—Oprah Winfrey says she and her TV crew were "mesmerized and riveted" by some of Lance Armstrong's answers during a 2 1/2-hour interview in which the cyclist acknowledged using performance-enhancing drugs.

Speaking on "CBS This Morning," Winfrey talked about how Monday's interview was arranged over a lunch with Armstrong in Hawaii and said he seemed ready to answer tough questions about drug use during a career in which he won seven Tour de France titles—victories now stripped from him.

Describing Armstrong's demeanor, Winfrey says, "I felt that he was thoughtful, I thought that he was serious, I thought that he certainly had prepared for this moment. I would say that he met



AP

This Monday, Jan. 14, 2013 photo provided by Harpo Studios Inc., shows talk-show host Oprah Winfrey interviewing cyclist Lance Armstrong during taping for the show "Oprah and Lance Armstrong: The Worldwide Exclusive" in Austin, Texas.

the moment." She says she was "satisfied" with the answers.

Winfrey adds that no lawyers were allowed in the room dur-

ing the interview and that during a break Armstrong asked if there would be a point when the questions would lighten up.

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WADA: Armstrong needs to confess under oath



LONDON (AP)—Lance Armstrong must make a full confession under oath - not just an admission in a television interview with Oprah Winfrey - if he wants authorities to consider lifting his lifetime ban from sports, the director of the World Anti-Doping Agency said Tuesday.

WADA director general David Howman told The Associated Press that Armstrong's interview with Winfrey is "hardly the same as giving evidence to a relevant authority" that deals with doping rules and sanctions.

"He's got to follow a certain course," Howman said. "That is not talking to a talk show host."

Armstrong was stripped of his seven Tour de France titles and banned for life from Olympic sports last year following a U.S. Anti-Doping Agency report that portrayed him as a longtime performance-enhancing drug user. After years of denials, he confessed to doping during an interview with Winfrey taped Monday.

Armstrong has been in conversations with USADA about a possible confession to authorities and a path to restoring his eligibility.

Howman said a reduced ban is possible depending on the level of cooperation.

"Is he trying to do something for himself to have the sanctions changed?" Howman said. "Does

he want to do something for the benefit of the sport itself? In both instances, he will need to make a full statement on oath."

International Olympic Committee vice president Thomas Bach said Armstrong should provide a complete confession to USADA or WADA.

"The TV interview is not the right platform," he told the AP.

The International Cycling Union, meanwhile, urged Armstrong to testify before its independent commission on doping to shed light on allegations that include whether the UCI helped cover up his use of performance-enhancing drugs.

Cycling's governing body said it was aware of reports that Armstrong had confessed during the Winfrey interview, which will be broadcast over two nights on Thursday and Friday.

"If these reports are true, we would strongly urge Lance Armstrong to testify to the Independent Commission established to investigate the allegations made against the



In this July 24, 2005, file photo, Lance Armstrong gestures for his seventh straight win in the Tour de France cycling race before the final stage between Corbeil-Essonnes, south of Paris, and the French capital.

UCI in the recent USADA reasoned decision on Lance Armstrong and the United States

Postal Service (USPS) team," the UCI said in a statement.

The UCI set up an indepen-

dent panel in November to investigate the Armstrong case and what role the governing body had in the scandal. The UCI has been accused of covering up suspicious samples from Armstrong, accepting financial donations from him and helping him avoid detection in doping tests.

However, WADA and USADA each complained later on Tuesday that the UCI panel is failing to offer amnesty to potential witnesses, which will discourage people from coming forward. The three-member UCI commission, chaired by retired British judge Philip Otton, will meet in London from April 9-26, with a June 1 deadline to deliver its report.

Bach, a German lawyer who leads the IOC's anti-doping investigations, said a limited admission of doping by Armstrong will not be enough.

"This is not new," he said. "If he says in general terms that he used prohibited substances, for himself and his reputation it

would come a little late. For the fight against doping, it would not help. He has to show how he managed to get around the tests and whether there was somebody who helped him."

In a statement from Montreal, Howman said WADA had followed "with interest" the reports of Armstrong's confession but that more was needed.

"While WADA encourages all athletes to come clean about any doping activities they have been involved with or know about, these details must be passed on to the relevant anti-doping authorities," he said.

"Only when Mr. Armstrong makes a full confession under oath - and tells the anti-doping authorities all he knows about doping activities - can any legal and proper process for him to seek any reopening or reconsideration of his lifetime ban commence."

In a separate phone interview, Howman said he had not been contacted by Armstrong but was open to hear from him.

"My phone number seems to be known to many people around the world and I'm sure that he could find it," Howman said. "If that day comes then I'll deal with it. I'm certainly open to dealing with anything."

Howman also questioned whether life bans were the solution to cycling's doping problems, saying that offering amnesty to riders who come forward with information would help the sport clean itself up.

Suddenly unwanted, Tebow has uncertain NFL future



NEW YORK (AP)—From nearly unstoppable to nearly invisible.

Tim Tebow was two wins from the Super Bowl a year ago. Now, he's pretty much a player without a team—likely to be released by the New York Jets after one frustrating season and his hometown team in Jacksonville already pulling in the welcome mat.

Even Tebow doesn't know how this will unfold. A backup role on another NFL team? A position change? The Canadian Football League?

"I don't know what my future holds, but I know who holds my future," the devout Christian said in a recent interview with Fox Business Network, his only public comments since his strange Jets season ended.

"And, in that," he added, "there is a lot of peace and a lot of comfort."

Tebow barely played for the Jets last season. "An absolute mess," is the way recently retired special teams coordinator Mike Westhoff described it. Tebow has two years left on his contract, but New York is expected to trade or release him in the next few weeks. So far, destination unknown.

"I can't imagine a scenario in which he'll be a Jacksonville Jaguar," new general manager

David Caldwell declared last week. "Even if he's released."

While there's an outside chance Tebow could remain a New Yorker, depending on the whims of the still-to-be-hired GM, it appears highly unlikely.

So, that's two NFL teams down - the only ones, at that, who showed any interest last offseason when Denver shopped him - and the 25-year-old Tebow's options appear to be dwindling.

"Tim Tebow is an extremely popular individual - or, he was," said former Cowboys executive Gil Brandt, now an analyst for NFL.com. "I think his popularity has waned significantly the last three or four months."

The buzz these days belongs to young quarterbacks like Washington's Robert Griffin III, Seattle's Russell Wilson, Indianapolis' Andrew Luck and San Francisco's Colin Kaepernick. It seems so long ago now that Tebowing—his signature dropping to a knee for a prayerful pose - was all the rage.

But even Tebow never Tebowed during the regular season for the Jets. Not once. Quite a fall for a Heisman Trophy winner and two-time national champion with the University of Florida, and whose No. 15 Broncos jersey ranked second in national sales to Green Bay's Aaron Rodgers in 2011.

Broncos OC McCoy hired as Chargers coach

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Mike McCoy's interview with San Diego went so well that both sides felt he was a perfect fit to become the Chargers' new coach.

McCoy had one thing to do, though, before accepting the Chargers' offer, so it was a good thing Chargers President Dean Spanos' private plane was at his disposal.

"There was no doubt in my mind when I got back on that plane to go back home," said McCoy, the former Denver Broncos offensive coordinator who was introduced Tuesday as Chargers' new coach. "They wanted to keep me here last night. But I said, 'I've got to talk to my wife about this before. If I made the decision without talking to my wife, I might get in a little trouble.'"

So McCoy flew back to

Denver to talk it over with wife Kellie. McCoy, his wife and their two children were back on the same plane Tuesday morning, flying back to San Diego to take the job.

"Without a doubt we knew this was the place we wanted to be," said McCoy, who signed a four-year contract.

McCoy replaces Norv Turner, who was fired along with general manager A.J. Smith after the Chargers finished 7-9 and missed the playoffs for the third straight season.

The move comes three days after the top-seeded Broncos were eliminated from the playoffs in a double-overtime home loss to the Baltimore Ravens.

The 40-year-old McCoy is the same age as Tom Telesco, who was hired as general manager last week. He interviewed

after the Chargers already had talked to Seattle defensive coordinator Gus Bradley, fired head coaches Lovie Smith and Ken Whisenhunt, and Bengals offensive coordinator Jay Gruden.

"Once he came in and once we saw how good he was, we just felt we had to have him now," Telesco said of McCoy. "We had to get it done or we'd lose him."

"He was polished, prepared, had great questions, which I think is big, too, that he had a lot of questions for us," Telesco said. "It's a partnership between the GM and the head coach, through and through. We spend more time with each other during the season than we do with our own family so it's got to be a tight relationship. When he came in, after a

little bit of time you could tell he was the right guy for us. We went after him hard."

San Diego was scheduled to interview Indianapolis offensive coordinator Bruce Arians on Wednesday. Telesco, previously the Colts' vice president of football operations, called Arians on Tuesday morning and told him the Chargers had hired McCoy.

"It was a tough phone call," Telesco said. "I have so much respect for Bruce. He's an excellent football coach. He's going to be a great head coach in this league. I was honest with him. I said, 'There's different situations, different fits, and right now, this is a fit for Mike McCoy.' He understood."

McCoy inherits a team that hasn't won a playoff game since after the 2008 season.

"I think it's fair to say," Tebow acknowledged last month, "that I'm a little disappointed."

The Jets had every intention of trying to make things work with Tebow when general manager Mike Tannenbaum surprisingly acquired him from Denver last March—after Peyton Manning arrived—for fourth- and sixth-round draft picks. But once

Tebow got on the field, something went woefully wrong.

Tebow went from being considered a key part of Rex Ryan's offense to almost non-existent. Offensive coordinator Tony Sparano didn't know how to use him effectively, and Tebow wasn't particularly productive when he got his few snaps in the wildcat-style formation. He made

his biggest mark on special teams as the personal punt protector, and did all he could to hide his frustration at not playing. But the numbers said it all: a mere 102 yards rushing and 6-of-8 passing for 39 yards. And, the most damning stat of all: zero touchdowns.

"I would've liked to see him get a chance," defensive end Mike DeVito said.

It didn't even come when Mark Sanchez struggled so badly that he was benched for the first time in his career. Instead of going with Tebow, the No. 2 quarterback on the depth chart, Ryan went with third-stringer Greg McElroy. Tebow now had a bruised ego to go along with the two broken ribs that limited him earlier in the season.

Bryant, Howard get 31 each in Lakers' win



LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Dwight Howard had 31 points and 16 rebounds, Kobe Bryant also scored 31 points and the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Milwaukee Bucks 104-88 Tuesday night for their second straight win after a six-game skid.

Metta World Peace added 12 points as the Lakers prepared for Thursday's visit from the NBA champion Miami Heat with an impressive effort against the Bucks, who lost for the second time in five games under interim coach Jim Boylan.

Bryant and Howard both had 30-point games for the second time in their brief tenure together, and the Bucks couldn't cope with Bryant's outside game or Howard's inside dominance.

Monta Ellis scored 17 points for Milwaukee, while Brandon Jennings was held to 12 points on 4-of-14 shooting largely by Bryant's defense.

Howard again played with an obvious spark in his second game back from a three-game absence with a torn labrum in his shoulder, defending aggressively in the paint while overpowering the Bucks on offense.

Pau Gasol missed his fifth straight game for the Lakers with a concussion, but the 7-foot Spaniard worked out before the game and will be re-examined before Thursday's game against Miami.

Clippers 117, Rockets 109

In Houston, Jamal Crawford scored a season-high 30 points, including 12 straight to start the fourth quarter, and the Los Angeles Clippers looked just fine without Chris Paul in a 117-109 win over the struggling Houston Rockets on Tuesday night.

The Clippers won their second game in a row despite missing their star point guard, who is day to day with a bruised right kneecap.

Los Angeles used a big third quarter to take the lead, and Crawford extended the advantage to 20 by outscoring Houston 12-7 in the opening minutes of the fourth quarter.

James Harden had 23 points for the Rockets, whose four-game



Los Angeles Lakers center Dwight Howard dunks during the first half of their NBA basketball game against the Milwaukee Bucks, Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2013, in Los Angeles. AP

losing streak is a season worst.

The Clippers improved to 11-1 this season when Crawford leads the team in scoring.

Los Angeles opened the second half with a 10-0 run to take a 68-59 lead with about nine minutes left in the third quarter.

Pacers 103, Bobcats 76

In Charlotte, Roy Hibbert had 18 points and seven rebounds, and Indiana handed Charlotte its 13th straight home loss.

The Pacers bounced back from Sunday's 11-point defeat to Brooklyn and won for the fifth time in six games.

With team owner Michael Jordan looking on from the bench, the Bobcats lost their fifth in a row. They've dropped 24 of 26 since Thanksgiving.

Indiana won this one going away behind some dominant inside play, outrebounding the

Bobcats 60-31 and outscoring them 52-22 in the paint.

Paul George had 16 points and 10 rebounds, while David West added 15 points and eight rebounds for the Pacers. George Hill chipped in with 16 points and seven rebounds.

The Central Division leaders (24-15) have not lost consecutive games since Dec. 9.

Gerald Henderson led the Bobcats with 15 points.

Nets 113, Raptors 106

In New York, Brook Lopez had 22 points and nine rebounds, Joe Johnson and Deron Williams each scored 21 points, and Brooklyn beat Toronto to extend its season-high winning streak to seven games.

Andray Blatche added 14 points for the Nets, in the midst of their longest winning streak since running off 14 in a row late in the 2005-06 season. A .500 team

when they fired Avery Johnson late last month, Brooklyn is 9-1 under interim coach P.J. Carlesimo and has pulled within 1 1/2 games of the New York Knicks for the Atlantic Division lead.

The Nets dominated the fourth quarter again, pulling away for their sixth straight home victory.

Kyle Lowry scored 21 points for the Raptors, who have dropped two in a row but still have 10 wins in their last 15 games.

Hornets 111, Sixers 99

In Philadelphia, Greivis Vasquez scored 23 points and Eric Gordon added 19 to help New Orleans beat Philadelphia.

Ryan Anderson had 14 points, Xavier Henry scored 11 and Anthony Davis 10 for the Hornets, who are last in the Western Conference at 12-26 with matching 6-13 records at home and on the road.

Jrue Holiday led the Sixers with 29 points and 11 assists. Nick Young and Evan Turner added 14 points each while Thaddeus Young scored 12.

Philadelphia hasn't won consecutive games since a three-game streak from Nov. 25-30.

Nuggets 115, Trail Blazers 111, OT

In Denver, Wilson Chandler hit a tiebreaking 3-pointer with 14.9 seconds remaining in overtime and Denver beat Portland for its season-best sixth consecutive victory.

Danilo Gallinari had 25 points, including a key 3-pointer in the extra period. Ty Lawson added 24 points and 12 assists for the Nuggets, who are 2-0 in overtime this season.

Portland, which lost for the first time in six OT games this season, was led by LaMarcus Aldridge's 28 points. Nicolas Batum had 22 points and J.J. Hickson 19.

Radwanska advances to 3rd round at Australian Open



MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Agnieszka Radwanska extended the best winning streak of the year to 11 matches as she rolled into the third round of the Australian Open with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Romania's Irina-Camelia Begu on Wednesday.

The No. 4-ranked Radwanska won leadup tournaments this month at Auckland and Sydney and is unbeaten this year.

"I can play even better," said Radwanska, who lost the Wimbledon final to Serena Williams last year. "I didn't really expect I could win that

many matches in a row, and hopefully I can keep going."

Her last two trips to the Australian Open have ended in quarterfinal losses to the eventual champion - Kim Clijsters in 2011 and Victoria Azarenka last year.

With top-ranked Azarenka and Williams on the other half of the draw, Radwanska's main obstacles to reaching the final are 2011 French Open champion Li Na, who beat Olga Goortsova of Belarus 6-2, 7-5 to reach the third round, and potential semifinal rivals Maria Sharapova or No. 5 Angelique Kerber of Germany.

Kerber advanced Wednes-

day with a 6-3, 6-1 win over Lucie Hradecka and No. 2-ranked Sharapova, the reigning French Open champion, was scheduled to play later Wednesday against Japan's Misaki Doi.

Williams hurt her ankle in her opening victory Tuesday, causing speculation that her bid for a third consecutive major title Open could be in jeopardy. She has only lost one match since her first-round exit at the French Open last year.

In early women's second-round matches Wednesday, No. 18 Julia Gorges beat Romina Oprandi 6-3, 6-2; Russian qualifier Valeria Savinykh upset No.

15 Dominika Cibulkova 7-6 (6), 6-4; and Kirsten Flipkens of Belgium ousted No. 23 Klara Zakopalova 6-1, 6-0.

On the men's side, 10th-seeded Nicolas Almagro was first through to the third round with a 6-4, 6-1, 6-2 win over fellow Spaniard Daniel Gimeno-Traver; No. 16-ranked Kei Nishikori of Japan beat Carlos Berlocq 7-6 (4), 6-4, 6-1; and No. 20 Sam Querrey advanced when fellow American Brian Baker retired in the second set with what appeared to be a right knee injury. Baker, who returned to the tour last year after almost six seasons out with a variety of injuries, won

a first-set tiebreaker and was even at 1-1 on serve in the second. He was later pushed from Court 6 in a wheelchair.

Murray, playing his first match at a major since winning the U.S. Open and breaking a 76-year drought for British men at Grand Slam tournaments, defeated Robin Haase of the Netherlands 6-3, 6-1, 6-3.

Second-ranked Federer beat Benoit Paire of France 6-2, 6-4, 6-1 in his first competitive match of the season. Other men progressing included 2009 U.S. Open champion Juan Martin del Potro, 2008 finalist Jo-Wilfried Tsonga and big-serving Canadian Milos Raonic.

Nationals, Soriano agree on \$28M deal



WASHINGTON (AP)—Reliever Rafael Soriano and the Washington Nationals reached agreement pending a physical on a \$28 million, two-year contract that includes \$14 million in deferred money, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Speaking to the AP on condition of anonymity because the deal was not yet official, the person said Soriano's contract contains a \$14 million option for 2015 that would become guaranteed if he reaches 120 games finished over 2013 and 2014 combined.

Soriano, who turned 33 in December, would join a Nationals bullpen that already includes Drew Storen and Tyler Clippard. Both of those right-handers closed games for the NL East champions last season.

The Soriano-Nationals negotiations were first reported by Yahoo Sports.

A one-time All-Star, Soriano had 42 saves and a 2.26 ERA for the AL East champion New York Yankees last year while filling in for injured closer Mariano Rivera, who plans to return from a knee injury in 2013.

Soriano decided in October to decline a \$14 million option for 2013, taking a \$1.5 million buyout from the Yankees and entering free agency instead.

Washington will lose its first-round draft pick in this year's amateur draft, while the Yankees will gain an extra pick after the first round as compensation for losing Soriano.

The righty signed his old contract with the Yankees after saving a career-high 45 games for Tampa Bay in 2010. Soriano began his tenure in New York as a setup man, and ended up getting the bulk of his work in the seventh inning in 2011. But he wound up taking over as the closer after Rivera was hurt.

In 11 major league seasons, Soriano is 15-24 with 132 saves and a 2.78 ERA with four teams, including the Seattle Mariners and Atlanta Braves.

Meanwhile, the Nationals announced they agreed to terms with LHPs Fernando Abad, Bill Bray and Brandon Mann, RHP Ross Ohlendorf and INF Will Rhymes on minor league contracts with invitations to spring training. Pitchers and catchers are scheduled to report to spring training in Viera, Fla., by Feb. 12. Position players report Feb. 15. The first full-squad workout is Feb. 17.

Rebels, Sun Palace resume play in Blue Haus caging

By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER



The 3rd Blue Haus Invitational Basketball League resumes tonight with a pair of games at the Garapan Basketball Court.

In the curtain raiser at 6:30pm, the undefeated R-Rebels take on Sun Palace, while Team Capalad collides with the Bandits at 8pm. Games were suspended last week due to scheduling problem.

Before the brief break, the R-Rebels managed to take the solo lead in Pool A with their perfect 3-0 record. The Rollers (3-1) are in second place, followed by Kentucky Fried Chicken (2-2), Servitek (2-2), Sun Palace (2-2), and JWS (0-5).

In Pool B, San Antonio remains unscathed with is 4-0 mark, while Docomo Pacific (4-1) is in good standing over Maplas Ka'Monney (1-2), the Bandits (0-3) and Team Capalad (0-3).

The Insider (4-0) leads Pool C



San Antonio's Jaymark De Guzman pulls up for a shot against a Maplas Ka'Money defender during their Jan. 4 game in the Blue Haus caging at the Garapan Basketball Court.

and is a strong contender in the playoffs, ahead of Hite (2-1), Yuman Construction (2-1), Cargo Express (1-1) and Hibiscus (1-2). Yuichiro Electric (0-4) is

out of contention, but still needs to finish the pool play match.

Only the Top 2 finishers in each pool will advance to the playoffs.

PBTS

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Karen Irinaka (58.23/46.72). Aika Watanabe and Yoshino Megumi joined in their first 50m butterfly race and submitted 55.76 and 58.28 seconds, respectively.

In the boys 50m butterfly, Hiroto Yanai, Rinto Takahashi, and Michael Villagomez achieved PBTS. Yanai posted 34.32 seconds to surpass his 39.90 seconds; Takahashi clocked in at 45.40 seconds to eclipse his 46.81 seconds; and Villagomez timed in at 58.92 seconds, chopping off about six seconds from his previous PBT (1:04.55).

Kento Akimaru had the fastest time in the 50m butterfly at 33.98 seconds, while other finishers include Lennosuke Suzuki (44.02 seconds), Taiyo Akimaru (55.21), JinnoSuke Suzuki (57.40), Junh Tenorio (57.72), Kenshiro Yanai (59.03), Richard Villagomez (1:09.23), and

Michael Villagomez (1:09.74). For the second event of the day—the 100m breaststroke—Kaito Yanai set an age group record and PBT (1:15.59), while Takumi Sugie and Takahashi also marked a PBT. Sugie's 1:25.66 was more than one second faster than his previous PBT (1:27.08), while Takahashi shaved more than 15 seconds from his old PBT (2:04.83) after logging 1:49.69. Kensuke Kimura had the best time in the 100m breaststroke race with his 1:13.14, while Angel Marie Tan led the girls field with her 1:24.05. Six other swimmers completed the race.

In the third event—the 100m butterfly, only Lennosuke Suzuki and Taiga Sato raced and recorded debut times of 1:49.20 and 1:57.44, while the fourth event—the 200m freestyle saw four swimmers getting PBTS. Hiroto Yanai and Michael Villagomez earned their second

PBT after clocking in at 2:27.47 (from 2:28.94) and 3:37.91 (from 3:38.22), while Michael Villagomez and Miku Torres had their firsts after submitting 3:51.82 (from 4:16.86) and 4:15.77 (from 4:28.08). Victoria Chentsova posted the fastest time in the 200m freestyle with her 2:24.80.

Chentsova finished only second behind Tan (35.12 seconds) in the 50m backstroke, but the former's 36.11 gave her a new PBT, more than two seconds faster than her old mark (38.24 seconds). Three more swimmers set new PBTS in the 50m backstroke with Kathrine Illahi timing in at 51.55 seconds (from 58.79), Aika Watanabe logging 54.62 (from 55.73) and Nanaka Watanabe recording 1:01.09 (from 1:06.00).

Kaito Yanai owned the fastest time in the 50m backstroke with his 33.70 seconds, which is also a PBT, more than one second better than his old mark

KFC

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arch and helping his team kept its distance against Pogi.

Borromeo's teammate CJ Morales only sunk one free throw in the game, but did a good quarterbacking job for KFC, keeping things in order for the eventual champion. Morales went on to claim the MVP award in the division, beating Darag and Garapan Boys & Girls' Mike Espinosa.

Darag and company arranged a finals tiff against KFC after Pogi downed Garapan Boys & Girls in the last semis game, 51-37.

Pogi managed a 20-17 lead at the half after converting three triples, two of which came from Alcor Admana. Admana had 8 points in opening half, matching the production of his partner in crime Darag.

Garapan accrued its offense in the first half off a more balanced attack, as it received contributions from seven players early on before its supporting cast faded in the second half. Espinosa scrambled for 15 points in the second half and did

not received enough support to muster a late rally.

In contrast, Pogi's bench stepped up in the clutch, as Jun Fidelino and John Cano teamed up for a baker's dozen. Darag, Admana, and Fidelino all finished in double figures with the former making 16 and the last two adding 14 and 12, respectively.

Super Stars rule U13 division

In the U13 finale, Super Stars stood up Evolution, 24-20.

Evolution assumed control at the half, 13-9, off the coat-tails of Chioni Dela Cruz, who scored 6 points.

Down by four, the Super Stars awoke in the playoff period and mounted a nice comeback. Manny Cobacha led the recovery, posting 6 of his 13 markers in the second half, while Dela Cruz was held scoreless. Cobacha went on to take the MVP honors in the U13 division, as he collected 38 points in the tournament and edged Evolution's Ylac Caracut (11) and Angelo Factor (20) and teammate Chevy Alipio (25).

It Don't Matter tops U21

The U12 title match was another

close game with It Don't Matter outlasting the feisty Blazers, 53-50.

It Don't Matter hung on to a 16-15 halftime lead after Ichitaro Faisao and Sheen Metran hooked up for a baker's dozen in that period.

Leo Galarse led the Blazers with a handful on the other end and did all he could to push his team over the hump at crunch time, but fell just short.

Shane Deleon Guerrero-Diaz arrived with the cavalry for It Don't Matter and delivered 11 markers in the second half stand, while Metran rang in a pair of treys for 9 more points for their title win. Lester Vertudez also helped It Don't Matter's cause, going 5-for-6 from the stripe in the homestretch. The three It Don't Matter stepped up in absence of Faisao, who twisted his ankle early in the second half and was not able to play again.

Metran turned in a team-high 16 points, while Galarse paced the Blazers with his 17 markers.

Deleon Guerrero-Diaz was selected division MVP after accumulating 45 points and beating Faisao (45), Leo Galarse

had the best time in the final race in the morning session, clocking in at 4:26.58, while as reported earlier, Tammy set an age group mark with her 5:13.53.

Meanwhile, results of the afternoon session of the weekend meet will be reported in Saipan Tribune's Friday edition. (Saipan Tribune)

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS									
EASTERN CONFERENCE									
Atlantic Division									
	W	L	Pct	GB					
New York	24	13	.649	—					
Brooklyn	23	15	.605	1 1/2					
Boston	20	17	.541	4					
Philadelphia	16	23	.410	9					
Toronto	14	24	.368	10 1/2					
Southeast Division									
Miami	24	12	.667	—					
Atlanta	21	16	.568	3 1/2					
Orlando	13	24	.351	11 1/2					
Charlotte	9	29	.237	16					
Washington	7	28	.200	16 1/2					
Central Division									
Indiana	24	15	.615	—					
Chicago	21	15	.583	1 1/2					
Milwaukee	19	18	.514	4					
Detroit	14	24	.368	9 1/2					
Cleveland	9	31	.225	15 1/2					
WESTERN CONFERENCE									
Southwest Division									
San Antonio	29	11	.725	—					
Memphis	24	12	.667	3					
Houston	21	18	.538	7 1/2					
Dallas	16	23	.410	12 1/2					
New Orleans	12	26	.316	16					
Northwest Division									
Oklahoma City	30	8	.789	—					
Denver	24	16	.600	7					
Portland	20	18	.526	10					
Utah	21	19	.525	10					
Minnesota	16	19	.457	12 1/2					
Pacific Division									
L.A. Clippers	30	9	.769	—					
Golden State	23	13	.639	5 1/2					
L.A. Lakers	17	21	.447	12 1/2					
Sacramento	14	24	.368	15 1/2					
Phoenix	13	27	.325	17 1/2					
FG Percentage									
	FG	FGA	PCT						
Chandler, NYK	170	253	.672						
Jordan, LAC	150	249	.602						
Howard, LAL	210	364	.577						
Ibaka, OKC	217	383	.567						
McGee, DEN	164	293	.560						
Bosh, MIA	241	433	.557						
Lopez, NOR	181	327	.554						
James, MIA	359	658	.546						
Faried, DEN	193	359	.538						
Asik, HOU	152	283	.537						
Rebounds									
	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG				
Howard, LAL	34	126	298	424	12.5				
Randolph, MEM	35	156	255	411	11.7				
Asik, HOU	38	113	309	422	11.1				
Vucevic, ORL	37	123	286	409	11.1				
Chandler, NYK	37	168	236	404	10.9				
Hickson, POR	36	140	253	393	10.9				
Lee, GOL	36	104	288	392	10.9				
Noah, CHI	35	133	239	372	10.6				
Cousins, SAC	33	114	224	338	10.2				
Faried, DEN	39	157	240	397	10.2				
Assists									
	G	AST	AVG						
Rondo, BOS	32	357	11.2						
Paul, LAC	37	358	9.7						
Vasquez, NOR	37	337	9.1						
Holiday, PHL	34	298	8.8						
Westbrook, OKC	38	321	8.4						
Calderon, TOR	37	288	7.8						
Williams, Bro	36	276	7.7						
Nelson, ORL	28	204	7.3						
Parker, SAN	38	268	7.1						
James, MIA	36	247	6.9						
NBA LEADERS									
Scoring									
	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG				
Bryant, LAL	37	384	256	1104	29.8				
Anthony, NYK	30	301	193	878	29.3				
Durant, OKC	38	364	304	1100	28.9				
Harden, HOU	37	296	316	981	26.5				
James, MIA	36	359	171	937	26.0				

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAIPAN

From Page 28

which was launched last year.

"We know the ultra marathon or 50K has become a significant race at the international level. In an effort to continue developing and growing the Saipan Marathon, this year's race will still include the 50K kanpei course," Duenas said.

JONES

From Page 28

on the front and back nines for a gross 93.

The club's newcomer Joseph Muna recorded the lowest gross with his 81 (44 and 37), but had to settle for third, as he wound up with a net 71.

Notably, Frank Sablan (net

Former Olympian Eric Wainaina Wahinya of Kenya ruled the inaugural 50K race with a time of 3:32:19 and he was the lone runner out of more than 20 participants to complete the lung-busting event under the four-hour mark

Meanwhile, registration fees turned in on or before Feb. 1 for the 50K and marathon cost only \$55 for US and CNMI runners, while entry fees for

75) finished as last Sunday's second lowest grosser with an 83, but clinched only the sixth spot (in the net category) behind fourth placer Dr. Larry Hocog (93 gross/74 net) and Terry Attao (109 gross/74 net).

Other Amigo golfers who joined the season opener were John Matsumoto (94/75), Joe Tudela (88/75), Ben Jones Jr. (93/76), Manny Tenorio

half marathon and 10K are \$45. Entry fees and registration submitted after Feb. 1 have additional late fees of \$10. Interested participants have until 5pm on Feb. 7 to sign up. Registered runners will receive finisher's t-shirt, certificate of completion, and entry to the awards banquet.

Runners competing in the 50K will start the event at 4:30am, while marathon entries

(90/76), John Guerrero (89/77), Syl Ada (87/77), Lorraine Babauta (93/77), Frank Guerrero (97/78), Ben Jones Sr. (92/78), Felix Sasamoto (105/86), and Danny Quitugua (101/87).

Meanwhile, the club announced that the second and final round of the January Ace tournament will be held on Jan. 27, also at Kingfisher, with a show time at 11:30am. Scores in the two rounds

will leave AMP at 5:45am. Start time for half marathon and 10K is 6am.

Entry forms can be picked up at the MVA office in San Jose, Beach Road or can be downloaded at the MVA official website www.mymarianas.com. under "Event Calendar." For more information, contact Ed Diaz at 664-3200/1 or through email at ediaz@mymarianas.com. (Saipan Tribune)

will be combined to determine the January Ace winner.

The group added it is still accepting members. There are over 20 Amigo members and men and women compete against each other in a handicap-based net scoring system.

For more information, contact John Guerrero at 287-6352, Joe Sablan Jr. at 322-1177, or Lorraine Babauta at 989-7732.

Rollers Basketball Club Holiday Hoops

PHOTOS BY WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND



Evolution's Angelo Factor fires a 3-pointer against the Super Stars during their U13 game in the Rollers Basketball Club Holiday Hoops Youth Basketball Tournament at the Garapan Basketball Court.



It Don't Matter's Shane Deleon Guerrero-Diaz makes a move toward the hoop in their U21 finals match against the Blazers.



It Don't Matter's Ichitaro Faisao slashes through the paint for a layup during their U21 championship match against the Blazers.



Pogi's Melvin Deocares pushes the ball up court during their U15 semifinals game against Garapan Boy & Girls.



Pogi's Sam Darag tosses up an acrobatic layup againsts Rollers during their U15 game.



Evolution's Ylac Caracut tosses up a putback against the Super Stars during their U13 match.



Pogi's Wilfredo Francisco avoids traffic through the lane during their U15 title game against Kentucky Fried Chicken.



Evolution's Angelo Factor runs into a wall of Super Stars defenders.



WADA: Armstrong needs to confess under oath

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Bryant, Howard get 31 each in Lakers' win

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KFC leads winners in Holiday Hoops

Kentucky Fried Chicken players and their supporters pose for a photo after winning the U15 title in the RBC Holiday Hoops Youth Basketball Tournament against Pogi last Tuesday at the Garapan Basketball Court.

WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND



By WALTER CEPEDA SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Kentucky Fried Chicken was one of the three champions crowned in the Rollers Basketball Club's Holiday Hoops Youth Basketball Tournament last Tuesday at the Garapan Basketball Court.

PBTs pour in NMIFS meet



Personal best times were made one after another during the NMISF Swim Meet held last Saturday at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

In the morning session alone, 25 PBTs were registered, giving swimmers from Saipan Swim Club and Tsunami Saipan Swimmer Centre a fruitful weekend and a positive grade in the first tournament of the year and second under the sanction of Northern Mariana Islands Swim-

ming Federation.

The weekend meet started with the girls 50m butterfly race with four swimmers setting PBTs. As reported earlier, Miku Tammy's 33.16 seconds in the event set a new CNMI age group record in the 9 to 10 division and a PBT, surpassing her 35.61 seconds seed time. Also tallying new PBT were Angel De Jesus, from 36.51 seconds to 34.37 seconds, Kyona Rivera (49.13/46.68), and

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Saipan Swim Club's Michael Villagomez races in the 100m freestyle event in last Saturday's NMISF Swim Meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

KFC clinched the U15 championship after defeating Pogi in the finals, 34-29.

The U15 finals saw KFC grinding out a shaky 16-15 halftime edge, thanks to a late three-pointer from Dicky Feria.

The title game was pretty



even after the first half with Wilfredo Francisco pacing KFC with his 7 points and Pogi's Sam Darag duplicating the former's output.

Then in the second half, KFC's Art Borromeo heated up, connecting two shots from behind the

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Jones stays in strides, tops Amigo opener



Jones

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REPORTER



Amigo Golf Club's 2012 Ace of Aces champion Sherlyn Jones picked up where she left off, ruling the group's season-opening tournament held last Sunday at the Kingfisher Golf Links.

Despite some strong trade winds over the weekend, Jones turned in a raw 85, the third lowest gross score of the day, to claim the early lead in the 19-player field. She started the competition with 42 on the front nine and had a 43 on the back side to earn a net 67 after the handicap adjustment.

Jones' familiar rival, Doll Yamagishi, finished close behind in second place with a net 70. Yamagishi had a 47 and 46

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Saipan Marathon kicks off March trifecta



The 8th Saipan Marathon will start the island's busy schedule in March, as the annual race hits the road on March 2.

The Saipan Marathon, which features 10K, half-marathon, full marathon and 50K (kanpei course) races, is part of the island's March trifecta, joining the equally prestigious XTERRA Saipan (March 9) and Tagaman Triathlon (March 16)

"The Saipan Marathon, along with the XTERRA Saipan Championship and the Tagaman Triathlon, make March our busiest month and are important promotional tools used by the MVA to publicize the Northern Marianas," MVA Community Projects manager Martin Duenas said in a press release sent to *Saipan Tribune*. "These events not only attract hundred of racers and their family and friends, but



SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Participants in last year's Saipan Marathon head out to the course. This year's Saipan Marathon will be held on March 2.

also provide the opportunity to showcase our beautiful islands through the visiting media."

Last year, 751 individuals crossed the finish line of the Saipan Marathon at the American Memorial Park and MVA reported that over \$2-million in advertising exposure in Japan and Korea were expected, as the 2012 race was shown in TV shows and reported in

magazines in these countries.

This year, MVA is hoping to equal, if not surpass, the number of runners (around 800) in the 2012 event and is also counting on the participation of local athletes.

In its bid to maintain the big number of entries to the March 2 race, MVA added it decided to keep the grueling 50K event,

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